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SEVEN TRIBES OF BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

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THE FORT JAMESON NGONI

By J. A. BARNES

Historical and Ecological Background

101 [131] There are about a dozen groups of peoples in different parts of Africa who call themselves Nguni, and others not using that name have also been classified as Nguni on the basis of common origin. They are found in Tanganyika Territory, Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland, and Northern Rhodesia. The name Nguni is derived from Nguni, the designation applied to themselves by the Zulu and Xhosa peoples. The Nguni have a common history of emigration from 175 the vicinity of Zululand, in Natal, in the 1820's, and of subsequent 101 migration northwards. This common heritage they share with the Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia. These migrations were occasioned by the rise to power of the Zulu chief Shaka, whose defeat of his chief rival, Zwide of the Ndandwe, led to the flight northwards of parties of Ndandwe refugees. At least two parties travelled as far north as the River Zambezi, one of them led by Zwangendaba, whose party crossed the river in 1835.[1] This Nguni group reached the vicinity of Lake Tanganyika in about 1845, and there Zwangendaba died. His people split into several segments, led by his sons and other followers. One of these segments went on farther north, others turned towards Lake Nyasa, while one segment led by Mpezeni, a son of Zwangendaba, struck south-westwards towards the Bemba country in what is now the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia. Here, in about 1856, they fought unsuccessfully with the Bemba, retreated southwards, and in about 1865 crossed the River Luangwa into Fort Jameson District. In 1868 they moved westwards into Petauke District, and a few years later moved eastwards to their present habitat in the vicinity of Fort Jameson.[2] It is with this group of Nguni that we are concerned.[3]

[1] Poole, *Story of the Crossing of the Zambezi*, pp. 190–2.

[2] Cf. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, pp. 459–70; Chilliaulia, *My Figure of Nyasaland*, pp. 1–36; Doyle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 151; Elmslie, *Among the Wild Angoni*, p. 18; Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, pp. 310–13; Hodgson, *Notes on the Achewa and Angoni*, p. 113; Kayamanda, *Angoni*, Uniondale 28 Nyasaland, pp. 1–11; Lawrence, *Yesterday Chronology*, p. 82; Poole, *Native Tribes*, pp. 3–10; Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 362; Reigard, *Natives of Nyasaland*, p. 126; Watson, *Natives of British Central Africa*, p. 182; Wilson, *Gumbiriko . . . der Angoni*, pp. 180–6; Winterbottom, *Angoni Paramountcy*, pp. 126–31; Young, *History of the Tumbuka-Kamanga*, pp. 108–13.

[3] I worked among these people for 2 years in 1938–9 as an Assistant Anthropologist of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

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The present-day population of the tribe is about 85,000, of whom about 60,000 live in Northern Rhodesia and 25,000 in the Fort Manning area of Nyasaland.[1] In Northern Rhodesia the tribe is largely confined to two demarcated Native Reserves. In 1938 the density of population in these two reserves averaged 68 persons to the square mile,[2] but in some congested or very fertile areas it was 90 or more.[3] Since 1941 the density has been reduced in some of the more congested parts by controlled resettlement in areas outside the reserves.[4] The density of population of the Nyasaland section of the tribe was about 46 persons to the square mile in 1945.[5]

The region in which the Ngoni live consists of a fairly flat plateau about 3,500 feet above sea-level, with massive granite outcrops rising another 1,000 feet or more. The soils of the region are principally of the types suitable only for shifting or partial cultivation, but there are also belts of more valuable soils.[6] In relation to the customary mode of agriculture, in which maize is the principal crop, the critical density of the land has been calculated to be about 22 persons to the square mile.[7] The annual rainfall at Fort Jameson varies from 27 to 48 inches, averaging about 35 inches. The region contains the meeting of the Lusangwa-Nyasa and Lusangwa-Zambezi watersheds. Most of the streams that flow down into the Lusangwa dry up in July, while the Zambezi and Nyasa streams continue to flow somewhat longer.[8]

The natural vegetation of the region consists principally of *Brachystegia-Isoberlinia* woodlands, with larger trees along the lines of streams. The mean maximum temperature for the region is about

of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. This account was prepared at Oxford, and I am very grateful to Dr. Max Gluckman for criticisms of this paper in draft.

[1] In the 1945 Nyasaland census many of the people living in the two Ngoni reserves were classified as Cewa. Hence the figure of 5,431 Ngoni in Fort Manning does not represent the total population of these two reserves. Cf. *Report on the Census*, Table 9.

[2] Calculated from the figures given in the *Fifth Report*, p. 364. These two reserves contain Cewa chieftainships as well as Ngoni, but the average population density of the two tribes is probably of the same order.

[3] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, p. 70.

[4] Fraser, *Land Resettlement*, pp. 47-9.

[5] *Report on the Census*, Table 8. The Fort Manning District contains 2 Cewa chieftainships as well as the two Ngoni. The figure given above is the average for the whole district.

[6] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, p. 70.

[7] Allan, *African Land Usage*, p. 14.

[8] Poole, *Nyasa Geography*, pp. 1 and 2.

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132. 84° F. and the mean minimum 61·5° F.[1] Three seasons are distinguished: the wet season, from the beginning of November until about April; the cold season, from May until July; and the hot season, from August until the rains begin again. Most of the planting takes [241] place in the first half of the wet season, and the harvest comes after the rains have ceased. There is very little fishing, but antelopes, leopards, 224 wild pig, and buck are hunted for their meat, and lions, leopards, 136 hyenas, and monkeys on account of the damage they do to crops and livestock. The greater part of the region is free enough from tsetse fly to permit cattle-keeping, and for the tribe as a whole there is approxi- [231] mately one head of cattle to every two people. Pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens are also kept.

571 The material culture of the tribe is similar to that of their neigh-
572 bours. They live in one- or two-roomed huts of bamboo or pole and
573 mud; some women make pottery and some men make reed mats;
285 all buy their clothes and their hoes from the shops.[2]

Three languages are used in the region: Ci-Ngoni, a language akin to
197 Zulu, is now heard only in songs and royal praises; Ci-Nyanja is taught in the schools and is used for communication with Europeans and Indians; while the normal language used every day in the villages is a dialect of Ci-Nsenga.

I. THE STATE

Old Administrative System

186 The Ngoni think of themselves as different from their neighbours
69 because of their chiefdomship. The other tribes do not, in the eyes
642 of the Ngoni, possess the same kind of pyramidal and centralized organization which was characteristic of the régime of Mpezeni I and which persists in a modified form at the present time.

The important positions in the old political structure were occupied
69 by members of the royal lineage, their queens, the regional governors,[3]
691 and the lieutenants.[4] The political system was at the same time the
559 territorial system, residence being determined by political allegiance. The pattern of residence and allegiance persisted despite the movement of the tribe as a whole from one region to another and despite

[1] Vaupell, *Ecological Survey*, pp. 2–3.
[2] See my *Material Culture of the Fort Jameson Ngoni*.
[3] Mabwenzwene, *pl. chwenzwene*. [4] Nkosa, *pl. nkosa*.

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the absence of any definite internal land boundaries between the territories of one political segment and another. The constant elements were the residential groups that we now know as villages,[1] and we may liken them to ships of different sizes and importance that preserve a loose formation while the fleet sails from place to place. Villages, discrete clusters of dwellings in comparative proximity and separated from one another by cultivated stretches of garden-land and bush, were internally divided into divisions,[2] and from time to time these divisions broke away from one another or from their parent village to form new villages of their own. This process of divisional fission was characteristic of the commoner villages. Royal villages were usually formed by a parallel process by which an important member of the royal lineage established a new village for one or more of his queens by recruitment from his own natal village. The eldest son by the senior queen in that village then became the head of the segment of the royal lineage associated with the village. Thus the segmentation of the royal lineage was reflected in a proliferation of royal villages.

In the period immediately prior to the conquest of the tribe by British forces in 1898, there were four important royal villages, with populations of probably several thousands each. One belonged to a brother of Mpezeni, and the other three were controlled by groups of Mpezeni's own queens and their sons. Associated with each royal village were several regional governors, each of whom was responsible for the well-being of a group of lesser villages, and who resided among them in a village of his own. These lesser villages were commoner villages, with senior lin own headmen. Each large royal village had also a number of lesser royal villages attached to it, and also many commoner villages were attached to a royal village of some sort directly, and not through a regional governor.[3]

Each important person, chief, member of the royal lineage, regional governor, or headman was assisted by a number of functionaries, trusted subordinates who were usually not patrilineal kinsmen of their principal but who were sometimes related ethically. These functionaries were ranked in order of the creation of their posts by their principal and assisted him in the control of his unit of administration. In the case of Mpezeni himself, however, there were two kinds of functionaries. These people known as the functionaries of Mpezeni were

[1] Mizozi, pl. mizozi.
[2] Ziguba, pl. ziguba.
[3] Cf. Rogers, An African Aristocracy, p. 68, for a similar system among the Ionsi.

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64 charged by him with specific functions relating to the State as a whole, and appear to have exercised general jurisdiction. Other lieutenants were known as the lieutenants of such-and-such a royal village, and were appointed by Mpezeni to look after the queens of the village and to be responsible for the internal ordering of the vil'age.

In addition to these lieutenants each important person had a deputy,[1] who was a patrilineal kinsman of the same generation. Each new holder of the principal office selected his own deputy. The deputy's task was to act for his principal in his absence and to serve as an intermediary between the principal and his lieutenants.

[61] [558] All these posts were hereditary in the agnatic line, except for that of deputy, but new posts were continually being created and the holders of other posts fell into disgrace. Some of the lieutenants of Mpezeni were also headmen of their own villages, while other lieutenants were promoted to be regional governors.

69 178 161 Increase in population led to increase in the number of villages and of recognizable divisions within villages, both by divisional fission and by the setting up of separate establishments for groups of wives. This process, operating in response to population pressure from below, was assisted from above by the need to give newly created lieutenants and governors their own dependants and their own recognizable residential cluster.

69 64 The relative position and importance of a segment of the political structure might alter if its leader was killed in battle or if he offended the Paramount. For example, a certain lieutenant who had a village of his own committed adultery with one of Mpezeni's queens. He was [569] put to death, and all his followers were made to come and live in a 64 royal village. But in addition to the natural increase in the population 77 of any segment, new members were added by capture in war. There 565 was never any distinct class of slaves or captives in the Ngoni State. [567] Apart from the aristocratic families which traced their history back to the pre-migration period in Natal, the rest of the tribe had been either captured at one time or other on the way north, or had joined the Ngoni of their own volition. On capture, people were assigned to some or other important person, and after a while acquired a certain autonomy of their own. The men were all enrolled into the age-set 69 64 regiment appropriate to their age, and it was possible for them to rise 70 to high positions in the State. No distinction of ethnic origin was

[1] Mazuna, pl. ezuna. Cf. the Zulu term umnawe, younger brother who is next to the heir.

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made in the regimental system, which was organized on a national basis. A person of low ethnic status, that is, of comparatively late incorporation into the tribe but of senior regiment, was considered to be, in most circumstances, as good as a man of more aristocratic family but of a junior regiment. New regiments were formed about every four years.

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Development of Minor Chieftainships

The defeat of the Ngoni army at the hands of the British in 1898 and the subsequent establishment of British control led to the partial breakdown of this system. The population was dispersed by the fighting and by the unsettled conditions that followed, and part of the kingdom was cleared for European occupation. The Administration recognized the grandson of Mpezeni I as the chief of the tribe, and also worked through a number of men known as Divisional Headmen, who were made responsible for small areas. Some of these divisional headmen were regional governors, some lieutenants of Mpezeni, some members of the royal lineage, and others were upstarts. It is not clear from the rather meagre records that remain or from the statements of informants exactly what happened between 1898 and 1914, but we know that by the latter date the Administration had come to recognize six men as local chiefs, apart from Mpezeni, and that four of them were said to be sons of Mpezeni I.[1] In 1929, when the term Native Authority was introduced, nine minor chiefs were appointed, of whom four were descended from Mpezeni I and one from the father of Mpezeni I. Two of the other minor chiefs have the descent-name *Jere* that belongs to the royal lineage, and may be regarded as belonging to assimilated lineages. One is descended from a regional governor, the other from a policeman. Two minor chiefs do not [illegible] this descent-name, one being descended from a lieutenant of Zwangendaba and the other from a regional governor. This arrangement of one Paramount Chief and nine minor chiefs persists to the present day. With each of the ten chiefs is associated a more or less defined area within which most of the villages are said to belong to the chief of the area. What appears to have happened during the thirty years after the conquest is that the central power declined and that certain political and territorial segments achieved a degree of autonomy. The ten areas belonging to the different chiefs, which I shall refer to as counties, represent

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[1] Cashmore, *Native Tribes*, pp. 10 and 14.

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175 ten units of different orders of segmentation in the old system and are
648 now regarded as ten homologous territorial segments in the new.
631 Thus one village founded for a group of queens by Mpezeni I has given rise to two royal chieftainships, another to one royal chieftainship, and a third to a royal chieftainship and a non-royal one. On the other hand, there is no chieftainship corresponding to the son of Mpezeni I who was next in succession to the main heir.

621 There are royal villages in every county. The oldest royal village
634 in a county is now the capital of the county, and the lieutenants in the capital are responsible to the county chief. The minor chiefs have
178 continued the process of making new villages for their queens, so that in each county the chief lives in a recently formed royal village, founded either by himself or by his father, and not in his capital. The capital is often the biggest village in the county, while the chief's village is more frequently quite small. It is the name of the capital village rather than that of the chief's village that serves as the name of the county itself. Thus, while in the old days the national capital changed with each new Paramount, the county capitals do not alter. The new royal villages founded since 1898 have not the same importance in the political structure as had the pre-conquest royal villages. This change is reflected in the fact that there is now no real national capital in the old sense.

692 Disputes in the old days were settled in the village by the head-
[622] man, or were taken to the regional governor, or to the lieutenants of the royal village, for settlement. If the matter could not be settled there it was taken to the assembly of the senior lieutenants of Mpezeni, whose decision could be set aside only by Mpezeni himself. Now each chief has a court, and there is an appeal court on which representatives from each of the ten counties sit in turn. In the old
647 days important decisions were taken by the senior lieutenants, in consultation with Mpezeni, although the four large royal villages were to some extent independent of one another. Sections of the army, for
[721] instance, appear to have been sent out on raids from a royal village without reference to the Paramount.[1] Under the present régime
[648] meetings of the tribe as a whole are held at Mwamba, a centre established by the Administration at which there is a school and a dispensary. These are attended by the chiefs and such people as choose to come. These meetings are usually sponsored by the Administration, and meetings to discuss affairs that arise independently of the Administration are

[1] Cf. Gouldsbury, *A Trip to Mpezeni's*, p. 1.

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sometimes held at the Paramount Chief's village. Each minor chief holds meetings for the people in his own county to discuss matters of common interest. 647

Quarrels among the chiefs are mainly in terms of the traditional norms rather than of the new differentiation between them in the Native Authority system. The Paramount Chief may abuse the minor chiefs for not coming to visit him on his return from a journey, or for not bringing beer with them when they come to visit him. In each county there are villages which claim to belong to the chief of some other county, on the ground that they originated from the capital village of that county. These interleaving villages increase the pressure on the land of the county in which they are, and friction between the two chiefs concerned may ensue. The chiefs like to be able to offer new land for gardens to the people of their own villages, yet at the same time each chief likes to have as many villages as possible apparently under his sway. Hence there is competition both for the allegiance of the villagers as well as for the land that they occupy. These struggles may be resolved by the Paramount Chief or by the Administration with a redefinition of boundaries or by moving the interleaving villages to some other region. The Administration has from time to time placed one country under the tutelage of the chief of another, on grounds of administrative efficiency or the inexperience of a young chief. These moves are interpreted as attempts by one chief to incorporate the country of the other into his own, and allegations of killing by sorcery may be made against one minor chief on the death of another. Attempts have also been made to usurp the paramountcy, but this cannot be done openly under the present régime. 628 643 648 692 649

Efforts are also made by members of the royal lineage to achieve the creation of new chiefdomships by asserting the traditional autonomy of the rural districts into which the countries are divided for certain purposes. Seen in relation to the old system, these attempts are efforts to increase the segmentation in that branch of the royal lineage which corresponds with the modern county in which they live. It is unlikely that such attempts will be successful, as the policy of the Administration is opposed to the creation of new chiefdomships. 691 64

Sanctions

The principal check on the power of the minor chiefs is that exercised through the Paramount. The Administration, which is always 687 648

687 sensitive to suggestions that a chief may be oppressing his people,
649 usually works through the Paramount. One minor chief was sent to the Paramount's village for a period of instruction in order that he might learn how to rule wisely. On another occasion a chief who had abused the Administration was fined one month's salary by the Paramount. In both these instances the Administration was the initiator of the Paramount Chief's action, but he may also act without reference to it. It was reported to the Paramount that a certain minor chief had struck one of his subjects who had been slow to offer him beer. The Paramount warned the minor chief that he might kill someone this way, and that he ought to fine people, not to strike them. In a dispute between a minor chief and his court clerk over some new court furniture, which the chief wished to use in his own house, the Paramount intervened and ordered that the chairs be put in the courthouse.

643 The Paramount himself is subject to social constraint, and may be criticized by his senior functionaries. He is advised on how he should behave by these men, and if his behaviour is unsatisfactory they may rebuke him. At country meetings, headmen and others can voice their
644 complaints against the royal house as a whole, and have from time to
661 time protested successfully at such a meeting against too many of the Native Authority posts being filled by members of the royal lineage.

The Native Authority

647 Under the Native Authority system, introduced by the Administra-
[649] tion in 1929, there are a number of paid officials, apart from the chiefs, whose salaries are met by the Native Treasury. They include councillors, assessors, clerks, police, postmen, school attendance officers, and others. The most important of these, and the most highly paid, are
692 the councillors and assessors. They sit once or twice a week in court and hear cases brought before them. Each of the chiefs has a court, and for the most part the cases that come before a country court are brought by people living in the country. When litigants from two countries are involved there is no definite rule as to which court will hear the case and it largely depends on the wish of the instigator of the proceedings. Cases come before the Paramount Chief's country court that concern people from other countries and a litigant may take his case from one chief to another, including the Paramount chief, in an attempt to obtain a favourable and enforceable decision. The Appeal Court sits at the Paramount Chief's village and is held once a month.

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The councillors and amuseurs are nominated by the chiefs on the advice of their lieutenants and some of them are in fact lieutenants or their sons. The court clerk acts as secretary to his chief if he is literate, and he assists the chief in his contacts with the Administration. These chiefs are also sometimes sons of lieutenants or brothers of chiefs. One of the tasks of the court clerk is to issue licences of all kinds, for guns, beer selling, bicycles, dogs, and so on. This brings him into contact with many people and he does a certain amount of touring looking for unlicensed dogs and bicycles. Owing to this interest in licences and the running of the court, he is the person who takes the initiative in the few public prosecutions that are brought. Civil actions are initiated by paying sixpence for a summons, which is usually issued by the court clerk. He is thus well informed of quarrels in advance before they come up for hearing in the court. He is well known throughout the country and exercises a great deal of influence. 647 [693]

Chiefs and People

Whenever beer was brewed in a village, there was an obligation to carry some part to the chief, and this obligation persists. Apart from this, however, there does not seem ever to have been any organized system of sending tribute to the chief. Mpezeni is said to have had a monopoly of all prisoners of war, but those who had taken the captives were frequently allowed to keep them themselves. This is mentioned as a specific privilege of regional governors. Nowadays the chiefs expect hospitality when they enter the villages, but they have little call on the services of their people. The little assistance they get locally is probably less valuable than the presents they are given by men who are away working or who have just returned. When the chiefs visit the mining towns they are offered money and clothes by Ngoni working there. 622 431 [272] [727]

The chiefs own a number of guns and lend them to people they can trust. All the chiefs organize their own hunts, which differ from the hunts of ordinary people in that all the animals killed belong to the chief, who should, however, give a leg to the killer of each animal. Attendance is compulsory for adult men in the villages that are called out on the hunt, although in practice there are always many absentees. These royal hunts do not usually involve a whole country, but only part of the country. They are useful in keeping down the number of predatory animals, and damage done to crops by wild pig and baboons is sometimes attributed to the failure of the chief to organize enough hunts. 622 224 [911] [136]

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Royal and Commoner Villages

62 Nowadays most of the villages in the kingdom are commoner villages under the charge of headmen. From such evidence as is available, it seems likely that in the pre-conquest period there were fewer villages than there are now, and that they were bigger than are most modern villages.[1] It also appears that the process by which a division of a village broke away to become a separate village was a gradual one, so that at any one time there would have been some doubt in deciding how many distinct villages there were. This is seen at the present time in the histories of what are now distinct villages; the people relate how the first time they made a village of their own it was done only a little distance away from the parent village. Pairs of villages of common origin still tend to occupy sites in comparative proximity to one another, and may arrange their moves from one area to another, in search for new garden land, simultaneously.

In general, however, there is little difficulty in observing the village as a discrete spatial residential group. We may distinguish five types of village,[2] according to the status of the person in charge of the village. The capital villages and chiefs' villages have already been mentioned. Intermediate between these two categories are the royal villages. These have been formed from older royal villages to accommodate a group of wives of a chief or other member of the royal lineage, but do not now have a chief living in them. All these three kinds of royal village, capital, royal, and chief's, are controlled in the same way, by lieutenants appointed to the task in the first instance by a member of the royal family. There is another kind of village which I shall call a cadet village. The junior members of the royal lineage, that is, younger sons and sons by unimportant wives, did not have sufficient following to carry on this process of forming large new villages and merely lived with their wives in their natal villages or founded small villages of their own. Such villages are now similar in form to commoner villages, except that the headman of the village belongs to the royal lineage. All other villages we may class as commoner villages.

[1] 'The Angoni villages are about five times the size of an average Achewa village ...' (Gamitto, p. 6). Cf. Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 273.

[2] All types are known in the vernacular by the same descriptive term, *mzumi*, and there are no distinctive terms. It is possible to tell whether a village is royal or commoner by its name. A village with a male personal name is a commoner or cadet village. A village with a female personal name, or a descriptive name in the Ngoni language, is a royal village.

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TABLE 1. *Village Types*

Type of village		Senior resident
Royal	Capital	First Statesman
	Royal	First Statesman
	Chief's	Chief
Cadet		Royal Headman
Commoner		Commoner Headman

This process of village formation may be illustrated from Mpezeni's own country. The capital of the country is the village founded by Mpezeni I for his chief wife and one or two other wives. His heir Binga was born in this village, and when he married he founded two villages of his own which are now royal villages. In the senior of these two Mpezeni II was born, and in about 1915 he founded a new village which is still the chief's village of the country. There are other royal villages in the country founded in a similar manner.

This formation of royal villages would, other things being equal, lead to a dispersal of the population. It seems, however, that the major factor in dispersing the population since 1898 has been the formation of independent commoner villages. Many of these villages have histories that go back to the foundation of the village as an independent unit immediately after 1898, and it seems likely that the unsettled conditions of those days and the burning of villages did much to bring about the breakdown of the old system in which the royal villages were more important than they are today.

The royal villages are more closely connected with the chieftainships than are the commoner villages, and the chiefs visit in them more frequently than in other villages. A dispute in a royal village is usually settled by a meeting in the village itself attended by the local chief, whereas in the case of an ordinary village dispute the matter would be taken to the chief for him to settle in his own village or court. A chief may be called to a royal village to drink beer. The royal herds of cattle are kept in the royal villages, and the chiefs look to the first Headmen of their royal villages for the well-being of the royal cattle as well as of the inhabitants of the royal villages. All the cattle in the country are held to belong in one sense to the Paramount Chief himself,[1] but in so far as the cattle held by most people are concerned, there is no more to this statement than in the parallel expression that

[1] Cf. Gulliver, p. 19.

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422 Mpezeni is the owner of the land, or of the world. The cattle kept in
291 the royal villages are held to have belonged formerly to Mpezeni I or
643 to Zwangendaba, and therefore still belong to the Paramount Chief. Chiefs and other members of the royal lineage who have cattle inherited in this way, in fact dispose of them as they please when the Paramount Chief is not in their village, but if he appears and a beast is killed in his honour, it is the Paramount who is proved as the owner of the beast and not the local owner. In the capital and chief's villages the lieutenants are more under the control of the chief of the country, who may intervene to depose a lieutenant if he thinks that his cattle are not being well looked after.

622 The Administration does not distinguish between one type of vil-
621 lage and another, and gives the same title of headman[1] to the man in
648 charge of the village, whoever he may be. It tends to act on the assumption that all headmen are of equal status and have the same amount of authority in their villages. Combined with the decline in the power of the royal lineage, this policy may lead to the assimilation of the different types of village to a common form.

II. THE VILLAGE

Material forms

961 Ngoni villages, which form the principal units of administration in the country, contain from half a dozen to 120 huts. It is seldom more than a quarter of a mile from one edge of a village to the other. There is a rough arrangement of huts into parallel lines, with the doors all facing the same way at right-angles to the direction of the
[343] lines. Kitchen huts, which are similar in appearance to dwelling huts, are included in these lines, while in front of a line of dwellings may be a line of storehouses and sties for small stock. On the edge of the
[347] village are the cattle byres. There are seldom any fences marking off courtyards within the village, so that it is possible to sit on the verandah of a hut and look along at all the other verandas. If there are well-established divisions within the village, the boundaries of the divisions may be indicated by lines of elms.

592 Most people, except polygynists and some children, may be said to live in one hut, in which they keep most of their belongings and where they usually sleep. A single hut may be occupied by up to about ten

[1] Usually *kalulumu*, pl. *makalulumu*; *ochiwalo ochiwa pamusoro*, pl. *mochiwa mamusoro*. The specific term for headman of a ruler or paramount village is *mukulumusoro*.

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children, but it is unusual to find more than two adults living in the same hut. These may be either man and wife, or two women who are unmarried or whose husbands are away. Adolescent boys sleep in dormitories containing a number of boys, and there are similar huts for girls. Smaller children sleep with whoever is responsible for their upbringing, parents, grandparents, or other relatives, as the case may be. Children in fact sleep in a variety of huts, sometimes with their elders and sometimes with one group of playmates, sometimes with another. Polygynists divide their time between their several wives, although they may tend to keep their belongings in the hut of their chief wife. Men do not as a rule possess huts of their own apart from those of their wives.

The hut is said to belong to the man or woman living in it. There is a tendency to refer to the man as the owner if the marriage is patrilocal and to the woman if it is matrilocal, but this is not an invariable rule, and the builder of the hut, who may be living elsewhere, may be referred to as the owner. About half the dwelling huts have kitchens near by, separate huts of similar construction which are used for cooking and as sleeping-places for children and visitors. Where there is no separate kitchen, cooking is done inside the dwelling hut or on the veranda.

The village, then, is a collection of buildings of different types, in which people sleep and keep their possessions, animals are sheltered, and food stored. We must now consider how the inhabitants of the village are organized.

Structure

Royal villages have names in the Ngoni language that were given by their founders. For example, there is a royal village founded by Simgu, the eldest son of Mpezeni I, called Ngulowozi, meaning 'dormitory', as it was there that he put his wives. These villages are also sometimes referred to by the name of the senior queen for whom they were founded.

Most commoner villages, however, do not possess names of this type, and are known only by descent-names or by the names of individuals. These are usually the name and descent-name of the founder of the village, the man who first established the village as a separate unit. It is this individual name that is used to refer to the present headman of the village, the man recognized by the chief and the Administration as responsible for the village. This office is hereditary,

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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PLATE XIII

251
342
393
415

1. Sowing finger millet. The untidily thatched building on the right is a dormitory for boys

273
415
342
354

2. A queen brewing beer. It is only important people who own oil drums

NGONI

[Facing P. 208]

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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621 622 usually in the male line, and, other things being equal, it is the eldest son of the chief wife who succeeds his father. However, if the heir is a minor, the job of running the village may be undertaken by a brother of the deceased or by the first lieutenant of the village, and in this case difficulties may be placed in the way of the rightful heir should he claim his heritage on maturity. The usurper or his successors may take the name of the founder of the village as though there had been no break in the succession. There is among the Ngoni little of the 551 importance attached to the inheritance of names that is reported from other tribes of the region. Anyone may use the name of any of his patrilineal ancestors, so that, for example, most of the members of the royal lineage, men and women, use the name of Mpezeni on formal occasions in addition to their other personal names.

624 To assist him in his work a headman may nominate a deputy, and there may be in the village one or more lieutenants. The office of lieutenant in a large and prosperous village tends to be hereditary, but if there is no suitable successor the headman may appoint a man from another family to succeed. Many headmen have no deputy and some have no lieutenants.

621 582 178 In pre-conquest times the small residential group appears to have consisted of the men of an effective minimal patrilineage,[1] their wives, and the families of their prisoners of war. With the passage of time some of the senior captives became lieutenants of the head of the lineage and there was intermarriage between the aristocratic lineage and the captured families as well as between one captured family and another. This process of intermarriage has continued and I found, in every village I examined in the Northern Rhodesia counties, that each person is related to everyone else in the village, affinally and cognatically, in at least one way, while many people are related to each other by a number of different paths. In the Nyasaland counties this process of affinal assimilation has not been going on for so long, and here I encountered families of former captives who have not yet been linked by marriage to the family of their aristocratic captors.

Movement

361 166 A village is likely to stay in the same place for a dozen years or so. During this time some of the huts will have fallen down and have been

[1] Fortes, *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 192: '... the effective minimal lineage, that is, the lineage of smallest span which emerges as a corporate unit in economic, jural, and ritual activities and is differentiated from other units of like sort.'

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PLATE XIV

291
412
857
516

3. Boys crushing ground-nuts. The expressed oil will be used in a bird trap

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857
516

4. Boy playing with a toy motor-car made from maize stalks

NGONI

[Facing P.209]

19: Barnes E-S (1946-1949) 1959
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replaced by new ones, but the village as a whole may be regarded as stationary. The exhaustion of garden land in the vicinity of the village is the principal reason for moving, as with the passage of time a man has to go further and further from the village to find new land. Sooner or later it becomes more convenient to move the village to another locality where there is plenty of unpossessed land on which gardens can be made. The death of the headman is sometimes followed by a move to a new site, while quarrels within a village may cause a portion of the inhabitants to go off and live on their own, usually after the matter has been referred to the chief. Since 1898 many villages have been moved off land alienated to Whites, or away from congested areas.

When the Administration is the instigator of the move, the new village site is a matter for discussion between District Officer, county chief, and village headmen. In moves made on the initiative of the villagers, the various possible new sites are reconnoitred by the headmen and other important people in the village and the site chosen is notified to the chief for his approval. The first people start to make their gardens in the vicinity of the site, and work is started on the new village. For this a recently abandoned garden site may be chosen, as it is easier to clear. The first structure to be built is usually a cattle byre. Making a byre is very hard work, and I was told that if it was left till later it would be difficult to get people to tackle the job. Ramsay, writing of Gomani's Ngoni of central Nyasaland, relates how the headman's hut is built before the others, but this custom appears to be unknown in Fort Jameson District.[1]

Building is begun by the more industrious before the rains end, and is completed after the harvest. The transition from the old site to the new one is gradual, as, unless the distance between the sites is too great, people will continue working the gardens in the old area until they are exhausted. New gardens are indeed opened up on the old site of the village, and it is quite common to see the ground dug up between the huts at the end of the rains while there are people still living there.

[1] Ramsay, *Folk-Lore Review*, pp. 109–11. Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, pp. 203–5, gives an account of the building of a new village among Mombera's Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, in which the cattle byre was built first, but it must be remembered that this was a village built round a central byre, after the fashion of the South-Eastern Bantu, whereas the cattle byre in a Fort Jameson village is nowadays a smaller affair placed on the outskirts of the village.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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361 Huts sometimes become infested with ticks, or the site itself may prove to be intolerably damp. New huts are then built a short distance away or even contiguously to the old site, and no new gardens are made apart from those made among the deserted huts.

Internal Segmentation of the Village

341 We have already seen that the divisions within the village are
421 embryonic new villages. These divisions are most formally indicated in the Nyasaland countries, where there are large villages divided into a distinct number of divisions, with the spatial boundaries between the divisions indicated by a greater interval between the huts, and with each division named and under the charge of a lieutenant or of a particular kinsman of the headman. On the Rhodesian side, however, it is more usual to find that certain small clusters of huts within a village are regarded as being the division of such-and-such a person living in one of them. The bulk of the huts in the village do not belong to any particular cluster but merely to the village as a whole. These clusters do not have any name apart from that of their senior inhabitant, whose close relatives occupy the huts of the cluster. The leader of a cluster may be a lieutenant of the headman or merely some important person with a comparatively large body of dependants. Such clusters, which are often on the periphery of the village, sometimes originate from the grouping together by a polygynist of the huts of his various wives, and grow as their children marry and live alongside their parents. Another mechanism for the formation of clusters is that
[166] of immigration into the village at about the same time by a number of persons related to each other more closely than to the other inhabitants of the village, as, for example, on the break-up of some other village. The immigrants tend to build together if there is room. In this case the leader of the cluster may have little standing in the village. The boundaries of clusters are not always plainly indicated, while a man who is ambitious to make his own village may as a first step try to increase the clarity with which his cluster is defined spatially.

Land Utilization

311 We may divide gardens into three types: main, old village, and moist.
241 The moist gardens are made near streams, and are fenced to keep out cattle. Tomatoes, cabbages, onions, and other vegetables are grown, and maize is planted during the hot season so that it can be harvested in December or January. These gardens are cultivated only by the

10: Barnes E-5 (1966-1969) 1959
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more industrious and usually with a view to sale of vegetables in Fort Jameson. The sites last for many years and are usually abandoned because of the removal of the owner's village to a distant place rather than because of exhaustion of the soil. [311] [241]

Old-village gardens are made on the site of former huts and byres, in order to take advantage of the high fertility of the soil. These gardens are not usually fenced, except when they are made on the outskirts of some existing village on the site of an old byre. Tobacco is sometimes grown, but for the most part they are cultivated in the same way as are main gardens. The site belongs to the former owner of the hut or byre, so long as the garden continues to be worked. [423]

Main gardens are made from bush clearings, and are chosen with some regard to the type and quantity of the natural vegetation. Land that has been abandoned for long enough, say twenty-five years, regains its natural cover, and if the ownership of former gardens has been forgotten, it is treated as though it were virgin woodland, that is, it is permissible for anyone who wishes to come and cultivate it. A new village site is chosen to be near, if possible, an ample amount of such regenerated land, and at the first selection of gardens the headman of the village may go round the area and see where the new gardens are being made. Gardens tend to be within a mile of the village, but there is no one definite area that is associated with a particular village, so that if there are a number of villages in proximity, the gardens of their inhabitants will be intermingled. A man exercises a limit on the area of unfenced land round his garden, and may take up this land himself as he enlarges his garden. Hence at first there are considerable belts of bush left between one garden and the next. With the passage of time, these are cleared, and gardens become contiguous, with boundaries between them that are almost imperceptible at first glance. At the same time as enlargements are made, the least productive parts of the gardens are neglected, so that, as the years go by, the area cultivated by one man may gradually change its position, and fresh areas of resting-land will appear between the gardens. Main gardens vary in size from about 1 to 3 acres. [423] [961] [425]

If a man moves into a village and wishes to start a garden, he is usually given part of the garden of the person to whom he is attached in the village. A son returning from the mines may be given part of his father's garden. Conversely when someone leaves the village, his garden passes to his relatives. In particular, when a man dies, his 423

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423 widows continue to cultivate the gardens they had before his death. When a man opens up a new garden he may hand over his nearly exhausted old garden to some relative who does not wish to go to the labour of clearing new ground himself. Rights in land cannot be sold, but only given away, and no presents are given to the donor by the recipient of a garden or garden site. They can only be sustained by continued residence in the locality, either by the owner of the rights himself or by his relatives. There are very few court cases concerned with rights in land, and in the courts the only attempt I saw in which a man tried to enforce what he thought to be his rights was met by the statement from the bench that no one had any rights in land, for did not all land belong to the chief?

241 Maize is planted at the beginning of the rains, and the garden is usually weeded twice over before the maize has grown high enough to surmount the weeds. When the rains end, the stalks are felled and put into large stooks to dry. The cobs are then taken off the stalks and carried back to the village to be stored. Finger millet is grown in soil-fertilized patches scattered through the main garden, and in between the maize ground-nuts, pumpkins, and other crops are grown. Sorghum, bulrush millet, and rice are also grown. Most of the work in the garden is carried on in the rainy season, and after the harvest the garden is more or less deserted until the next season, although a certain amount of new land may be cleared as a garden extension.

Dwellings outside the Village

361 There are two types of settlement outside the recognized villages that require mention. These are permanently occupied settlements consisting of two or three huts which I shall refer to as hamlets and [578] temporarily occupied huts in the gardens. The hamlets usually arise as a result of quarrels within a village that are resolved by the breaking away of one of the parties to the quarrel. The activities of the Agricul- [648] tural Department have also led to the formation of hamlets of similar size, both of hamlets of persons accepting agricultural control whose co-villagers have all moved off, and the other way about. These hamlets are all attached to proper villages for registration purposes, and participate in many of the collective activities of the villages near by.

221 The damage done to crops in the latter part of the rainy season
361 necessitates the keeping of a continuous watch, particularly at gar-
[241] dens that are on the edge of a cultivated area, in order to drive off the monkeys by day and the wild pigs by night. Shelters are erected on

10: Barnes E-S (1946-1949) 1959
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the edge of gardens, and some people spend most of their time there, returning to the village only to fetch food. Beer parties are held in the gardens, and the villages, particularly in the middle of the week, are largely deserted during the day. One or two boys or old men may be left behind to look after the cattle. Streams are in spate at this time of year, and some men build garden byres to which they move their cattle to avoid the risk of the animals or their herdboys being taken by the water.

This life in the gardens is important from the point of view of inter-village action in that it provides an opportunity for new residential groups to form, albeit temporarily. People without garden shelters of their own may share the shelter of a neighbouring gardener, who may be from another village. People may site their gardens so that they are adjacent to those of kindred from other villages, with whom they will be united for this period of garden residence. Thus, for example, a woman who lives in her husband's village has a widowed mother still living in *her* dead husband's village a mile away. The gardens of the mother and daughter are adjacent, and they both possess garden huts which are built alongside one another. They co-operate in much of the work of their gardens.

With the completion of the harvest, the need for living in the garden ceases, but some people delay their return to the village for a month or so. The explanation given is that immediately after the end of the rains and the harvest, there is much activity by the Administration and the Native Authority in organising public works, and that by staying on in the gardens people hope to avoid becoming involved in these projects.

Cattle-keeping

The circular village cattle byre, with the dwelling huts built round it in a great circle, as occurs among the South-Eastern Bantu and as reported by Elmslie[1] from Members's Ngoni of Nyasaland, is not found at the present time among the Fort Jameson Ngoni. Most villages now have two or three separate cattle byres, and they are placed on the periphery of the village area. They consist of fenced enclosures open to the weather, with a single entrance blocked with poles, and may be up to 20 yards across. Calves are kept in smaller enclosures or in deserted dwelling huts whose owners have gone away or are dead. Where there are well-defined clusters of huts within a village, each cluster may have its own byre, but this is not always the case. Cattle

[1] Elmslie, p. 37.

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233 are out at pasture all day under the charge of herdboys, and may be
brought in for milking in the early afternoon, later returning to the
bush. Alternatively they are not milked until they come in just before
sunset to be put in their byres for the night. These activities are
857 organized by the herdboys, who range from five up to about twelve
233 years in age. All the boys in a village take part in herding, whether or
not their parents own cattle. A man keeps all his cattle in the village in
one byre, although he may also have cattle in other villages under the
care of relatives. The boys attach themselves to definite byres, and
the senior boy of the group becomes responsible for all the cattle in
the byre. He sees that the cattle do not stray into gardens during the
season when they may damage the crops, and he checks that all the
[668] cattle return at night. He instructs the younger boys in the art of
milking, and supervises the allocation of the milk, which is his per-
quisite. Cattle from all the byres in the village may be herded together.
After the harvest the cattle are often left to wander where they please
and the boys occupy themselves in the village or hunting for rabbits
until it is time to round up the cattle for milking.

628 There are no definite pastures associated with one village rather
233 than with another, so that the herds from one village may come into
857 contact with those from another. This may lead to fighting between
[541] the two groups of herdboys, and also, if it can be managed, between
the bulls of the villages. Boys take pride in the fighting ability of their
bulls, and sometimes seek out other herds in order to demonstrate the
superior strength of themselves and their animals. It is significant that
informants referred always to fights between bulls of different villages,
and not of fights between bulls from different byres in the same vil-
lage, although these do occur.

233 In the past, herding was carried out by older boys, and life as a herd-
833 boy was terminated only by enrolment into a regiment. Inter-village
357 fighting went on partly to demonstrate that the boys concerned were
now strong enough to join the army. At the present time boys of
twelve and younger are employed on tobacco farms, and many attend
school. Some cattle owners have to pay boys to come from other vil-
lages to herd their cattle as there are no boys available in the village
itself, while others obtain the services of young girls.

Inter-village Relationships

628 Villages are grouped together into counties, under a minor chief,
631 and in some counties there are recognized subdivisions that I shall

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civil rural districts. By virtue of their membership of rural districts and counties, villages have certain formal relationships with each other which we may regard as mainly political, and which we have discussed in connection with the organization of the state. But there are other inter-village activities that are not related directly to the tribal political structure. These include hunting, dancing, drinking, trading, and some co-operative economic activities.

Hunting takes place for the most part in the dry season, but hunts may be organized at any time to deal with predatory animals which are causing damage to crops and livestock. Only men and boys hunt. Any man who chooses can organize a hunt, but it is usually a man of middle age with some experience and of some standing in his village who sends out word to the neighbouring villages that he proposes to hunt in such-and-such an area on such-and-such a day. The organizer is referred to as the owner of the hunt, and he is in tactical command. He nominates two men to be in charge of the two wings of the hunt, and himself stays in the middle of the single line abreast in which the hunters arrange themselves. Instructions are shouted from the centre and passed out to the wings. Any animals seen are attacked with knobkerries, spears, dogs, and, if there are any, guns. The owner of the hunt has no special privileges over the animals killed, which are divided between the men who actually kill them and the people who carry them back from the hunt to the village. Attendance at such hunts is not enforced, and if the chase is unsuccessful, people tend to drop out half-way. In the main, people distribute themselves along the line of the hunt in village groups, and the leaders of the wings usually bring with them a large band of hunters from their own villages. There are usually about sixty people on a hunt, coming from perhaps ten different villages.

Dancing is an activity that brings people together from many villages. Although girls, and sometimes boys, hold dances in their own villages in the evenings, these dances are thought of as practices rather than as proper dances. The latter take place in connexion with ceremonies of various kinds, and indeed wherever there is beer to drink there is the probability of some sort of dancing. Dances are also held for their own sake, without reference to other forms of social activity. Of these, two are important in promoting inter-village ties. The first, *ngoma*,[1] the most formal of all dances, was danced by regiments in the days when the regimental system was still operative, but

[1] Cf. the Zulu dance *isigoma*, and Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 52.

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is now danced by villages. The important men in one village suggest to another village that this dance should be held in the latter village. If this is agreed, beer is brewed in the second village and on the pre-arranged day many people from the first village come in procession from their village to the dance. The visiting dancers enter the cattle byre and start to dance. They are joined by people from the home village. The dancers are arranged in two lines, men on one side and women on the other, and the dance consists of a series of virtuoso performances by two or three men and women at a time in the space between the two lines, to the accompaniment of clapping and antiphonal singing. The dance is followed by drinking and more dancing. Later in the year, or in the next year, the host village goes to the home of the visitors, and the performance is repeated.

Of more frequent occurrence are dances involving girls only. These are usually held on Sunday afternoons, and as at the *ngoma* dances, at least two villages are involved. Here the initiative is taken not by the important men but by the senior unmarried girl in the village. She invites a girl of similar status in another village with whom she is acquainted, or whom she has seen dancing, to bring a team of girls to dance in her village. This kind of dance is competitive in that the visitors are opposed by a similar team of girls from the home village, who dance separately from the visitors until, at the end of the session, the two teams combine. That team which has danced best is held to be the winner, although there is always great doubt as to which team this is. The girl who invited the visitors is responsible for seeing that the visiting team is fed, although beer is not provided. No work is done in the gardens on Sundays, so that these dances always attract a large number of onlookers. As with *ngoma*, a return match is danced at some later date. The pairs of villages that are linked in these dance exchanges are not always those that contain many people related to one another. One girl may ask an acquaintance in another village to find a team; in one case the girl who made the invitation did not know the name of the girl she was inviting.

Beer-drinking

Beer, water, and tea are the three main drinks of the Ngoni. The ordinary rules of hospitality govern the drinking of water, which is provided for the traveller whenever he asks for some. Tea is sold in the roadside stores known as hotels. Beer is more important socially

10: Banyuas E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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than either of these two drinks, and the drinking of it is essentially a social event. The kind of beer brewed is made from maize, sorghum, and finger millet. It is brewed by women, the process lasting about a week. The beer can be drunk at any time during the week, but it is not regarded as truly beer until after the brewing process has been completed. It remains good to drink for about three days, after which it becomes too sour. About 20 to 30 gallons of beer are brewed at a time. The beer can be sold, used to provide refreshment for participants in some ceremony or other, offered in return for labour or other services, or else just drunk for its own sake. In each case the presence of beer in the village acts as a magnet attracting people from other villages. Beer that is sold is of economic importance as it is the principal way in which women raise funds for themselves. In connexion with a ceremony of some kind, the attraction of the beer is secondary in general to that exerted by the ceremony itself. The provision of beer in return for cultivation services we shall discuss later. It is in the patterns of behaviour adopted when beer is drunk for its own sake that we can see reflected the structure of social action at the village level.

Beer is stored in earthenware jars of about 7 gallons capacity. A calabash-gourd cup is used to ladle the beer into earthenware bowls holding about 4 pints; from these the beer is drunk. When the beer is ready for drinking, the friendly fellow villagers of the man whose wife has brewed come to the beer-hut, which is usually the woman's kitchen, and the owner of the beer drinks the first jar with them. The procedure with each jar is that the owner of the beer gives the jar to someone, almost invariably a man, who becomes known as the divider of the beer, and who calls on someone junior to him to act as the dispenser of the beer. The dispenser sits on the ground and fills up the bowls from the jar under the instruction of the divider of the beer, and then takes them, or points them out to, the people to whom the divider wishes to give the beer. Thus the beer is given away in jars by the owner of the beer to the dividers of the beer, and is then divided into bowlfuls, and given by the dividers to yet other people. The owners of the bowlfuls drink some and pass on the bowls so that other people may drink. Each time these gifts of beer of different quantities are made they are acknowledged by the recipient in the form of a praise, consisting of the syllable yo followed by the descent-name of the giver. This is also done when a bowl or a jar is finished, so that when the last bowl of a jar is finished the owner of the bowl is praised, then the divider of the beer, and finally the owner of the beer. The

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273 recipient usually takes the lead in praising, and his praise is chorused by the rest of the people in the hut.

The first jar, then, is divided by the owner himself and the bowlfuls are given to his village neighbours. The next jar is given to the headman or lieutenant of the village for division, and it is with the drinking of this jar that the party is held really to begin. The first bowl of this second jar is given by the divider of the beer back to the owner of the beer, who praises the divider before drinking. The second bowl goes to some other lieutenant or, if there is no other village lieutenant, to some important woman. Successive bowls go to other important people in the village. Subsequent jars are usually given to important visitors from other villages, who will allocate the bowls to their companions and to people in the host village. The first bowl of each jar goes to the divider of the jar, and the dregs, which are usually taken as the two last bowlfuls in each jar, and which are poured out after the jar has been tilted on its side, go to the dispenser of the beer, and to anyone who has been helping him.

There is a great deal of freedom in the allocation of beer in this way, and the complaints of people who hoped to be given beer and who were unfortunate are an inevitable aftermath of any beer-party. It is important to note that the quantity of beer consumed by any individual is to some extent independent of the allocation of the jars and bowls. There are usually two or three bowls in use, and these are all filled up at each round. This means that most people in the hut drink each time. But what is remembered is not the beer drunk, but the method of allocation. Even if a man becomes intoxicated, he may yet complain the next day to his friends that the owner of the beer was miserly and lacking in generosity if no jar or bowl was specifically allocated to him. There is an obligation to return gifts of beer made in
[431] this way, so that a man can ensure a favourable reception for himself in other villages where there is beer, by his generosity and sagacity in distributing when there is beer in his own house.

262 The importance attached to beer-drinking is well brought out in
273 some essays written by schoolboys on the topic 'What I want to do when I leave school'. One of the boys wrote: 'Beer and cattle are the food of the Ngoni. . . . If your friend comes and he doesn't get beer and meat, then although he gets porridge, he still says that there was hunger in the house.' Another said: 'I will brew beer very often. Our life depends on drinking beer.' The small importance attached to beer
[829] by the neighbouring Cewa tribe is well known to the Ngoni, and one

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sophisticated informant remarked: 'The Cows are just down, they merely eat. The Ngoni are like the Whites; they eat little and drink much.' 273 242 829

Economic Co-operation

There are other activities which entail inter-village ties. Cattle and their own fodder, but small stock, pigs, goats, and sheep, are fed on kaoka and other scraps. A man whose animals have increased beyond his ability to feed them will farm out some of them to his friends, either in his own village or in some neighbouring one. The tender of the animals then exercises some control over the disposal of any natural increase and at the end of the arrangement he is entitled to be given one of the animals. The friends whom a man selects for this task are not always close relatives, and may sometimes be people to whom he can trace no genealogical relationship at all, but whom he may have met, for instance, in Southern Rhodesia. Other people acquire a reputation for integrity, and may be given animals to look after by their acquaintances. Cattle are not disposed of so widely, and there is more often a kinship connexion between the owner and the tender. On the other hand, cattle are more susceptible than small stock to tsetse fly, and in consequence there are many people in the new areas that have been recently resettled who have to keep their cattle in the village of a relative or friend who lives in an area free from fly. 233 476 628

Harvesting of crops is carried out by members of the household except in the case of the aged, who will call on their relatives to help them. Hut-building, making a new section of a garden, clearing the ground prior to planting, and, in particular, weeding the garden during the wet season, are activities that are often carried out by collective effort. Women, particularly pairs of widows, may work together in each other's gardens turn and turn about, and a man may be able to call on relatives, particularly his sons-in-law, to help in his garden without paying them for it. Most of the outside assistance that may be required in a garden is raised by means of a beer-party. The man's wife brews beer, and it is made known in the village and round about that on such-and-such a day there will be a party to hoe in their garden. A dozen or so people go to the garden in the morning, and work until the task set by the owner of the garden is completed. They then move to the village, and are refreshed with beer. Attendance at the beer-party is not restricted to those who have worked in the garden, and at some such parties a jar of beer may be specifically allocated to 241 476 602 273 476 241

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241 373 476 [485] those who have not been working. Some people choose to do their work in the garden on the day previous to the party, on the theory that working and drinking do not go together. A few people offer baskets of ground-nuts or other crops or meat in return for a day's labour, and monetary payments are also known.

Craftsmen

483 523 [462] There are a number of specialised occupations which give rise to inter-village trading. Pots are made by women. Some villages have no potter and their inhabitants are dependent on pot-makers in neighbouring villages. Sometimes a woman may acquire a reputation for pot-making sufficiently high to attract custom even from villages where there are already pot-makers. Pots are sold in return for their own volumes of maize, or for money, or the customers may be required to provide sufficient clay for twice the amount of pottery that they wish to obtain.

285 [462] Basketry is a man's craft, and at the end of the rainy season, when it is necessary to watch all day in the gardens for monkeys, men with this skill spend their time at it. Baskets are sold for money or for maize, and, as with pottery, there is a certain amount of inter-village sale.

759 [448] Herbalists draw their clients from a wider area than do the pot- and basket-makers, and their contacts with their patients are more intense. If a man falls sick, the remedies known in the family are tried first, but if these are unsuccessful he may go to someone who is known for his wide knowledge of medicines. Patients will travel up to 15 miles or so to consult a herbalist, who may require them to live in his village to receive treatment. Payment for medical treatment is sometimes demanded part in advance, but other practitioners ask for a fee only when a cure has been effected. Since the establishment of medical services by the Administration the way has been open for the medical orderlies to operate in opposition to the herbalists, using misappropriated European drugs.

III. THE FAMILY

Principles of Descent

611 [591] [583] [184] The Ngoni are traditionally a patrilineal patrilocal people paying bride-wealth with cattle. This tradition is reflected in modern practice only to a limited extent. Many of the men and women who were incorporated after Zwangendaba had crossed the Zambezi came from

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matrilineal matrilineal tribes, and the values associated with these systems of organization were not entirely forgotten. With the decline of the central power of the chieftainship after the conquest, cultural diversity within the tribe increased, so that at the present time we have a wide range of variation in the kinds of family found between one village and the next, and even within the same village. In particular, the irreconcilable differences between the organization of unilineal kin groups on patrilineal and matrilineal principles appears to have led to a condition in which, for most of the tribe, the only groups of relatives that emerge as corporate groups are stocks, people with a common ancestor from whom they are descended through sons or daughters or both. These stocks are not necessarily exclusive, and a man may think of himself at one time as belonging to one stock and at another time to another stock. Frequently alongside the true members of a stock there are other people who claim to belong to the same "family" who are in fact related affinally to the members of the stock. The organizing factor in domestic affairs is not kinship by itself but common residence combined with genealogical connexion. A stock, with its affinal accretions, emerges as the core of a corporate group of kindred only when its members live near one another and meet each other frequently. The strongest groups are those people of a stock who are living alongside one another in the same part of a village.

The use made of double affinal links in establishing attachment to a stock is noticeable. For example, a child will call a man who is his mother's divorced husband's wife's divorced husband by the term *father* (see Diagram 4 below). A man may bring into his village a wife from outside who may come with her children by a former husband. When grown up, the sons may also bring in wives accompanied by their children from former marriages. These children grow up to regard the village as their own and to think of themselves, in certain contexts, as belonging to the 'family' of the headman of the village. Informants in a village with a most complicated kinship structure will say 'We are all one family here'.

Kinship Terminology

The variation in the kinship systems of the different tribes from which the Ngoni recruited their members has led to some confusion in the use of kinship terms. Most of the terms now used are in the

[1] *Bonja*, pl. *mabonja*.

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[191] Nsenga languages,[1] but Nyanja and old Ngoni terms are also heard. The rules of application of these terms, as formulated by the people, are not always adhered to, and I found that when I challenged the accuracy of some of the kinship terms I heard being used, the speakers were quite ready to admit that the terms had been incorrect by their own rules. Here I propose to give only the Nsenga terms, in the way in which they are used when people are discussing other families, and in which to a lesser extent they are used as forms of address. It is with this meaning that the terms can be used to describe the operation of exogamy. A full account of their use must await further inquiry.

There are ten terms of wide application, and three more used in restricted contexts. These three may be translated as *husband*, *wife*, and *cross-cousin*. *Cross-cousin* is used of mother's brother's child and father's sister's child: usually the child referred to is of the sex opposite to ego. *Wife* refers to own wife, brother's wife, and brother's wife's sister, and similarly *husband* refers to own husband, sister's husband, and sister's husband's brother. Thus *husband* and *wife* are reciprocal terms, and *cross-cousin* is self-reciprocal.

The remaining terms may be grouped as follows.

1. *Father*, *mother*, and *mother's brother*, with a common reciprocal *child*.
2. The reciprocal pair *grandparent* and *grandchild*.
3. Four self-reciprocal terms, *sibling*, *sibling-in-law*, *affine*, and *child's parent-in-law*.

These have the meanings implied in their translation, but are also applied more widely, as is indicated in the diagrams. Throughout, the marriage sign is used to indicate any marriage, whether extant or terminated by death or divorce. The symbols used for vernacular terms are shown in Table II.

The way in which these terms are applied can be seen from the diagrams. In the more distant applications the genealogical connexion to ego ceases to be important, and indeed may be unknown. A man may have been told that he should call such-and-such a woman *mother*. He will then apply kinship terms to her close relatives in a systematic manner which is independent of his genealogical connexion to them. The same procedure is followed with the relatives of people called *father* or *sibling*.

[1] The same Nsenga terms seem to be used differently by the Ngoni and the Nsenga. Cf. Ranger, *Chinsenga Handbook*, pp. 68–9, 108–9.

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TABLE II. *Principal kinship terms in Nyanja language*

Symbol	Personal term	Basic reference and or translation	Reciprocal term
F	atate	father	child
M	amama	mother	child
C	mwana	child	father, mother, mother's brother
FF	mdzukulu	grandparent	grandchild
CC	mdzukulu	grandchild	grandparent
G	mchimwene[1]	sibling	sibling
BiG	mchimwene	sibling-in-law	sibling-in-law
EP	mpongozi	elder	elder
CEP	mdzuki	child's parents-in-law	child's parents-in-law
H	mwamuna	husband	wife
W	mkazi	wife	husband
FZC	mapwiti	cross-cousin	cross-cousin
MB	malume	mother's brother	child

[1] mchimwene means 'true sibling'. The terms for 'junior sibling' and 'his or their sibling' are mchemwene and mbale respectively.

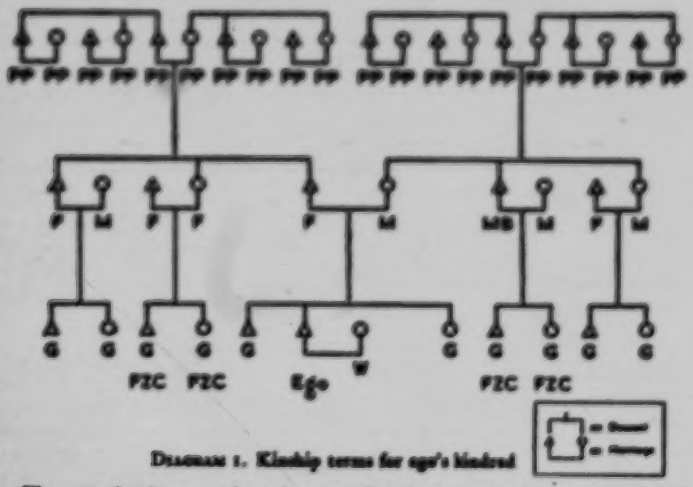

DIAGRAM 1. Kinship terms for ego's kindred

The terms for the generations after ego follow from the rule that *grandchild* is the reciprocal of *grandparent*, and *child* of *father*, *mother*, *mother's brother*. The term *sibling* is often used in place of *cross-cousin* when referring to a cousin of the same sex as ego.

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5. Girls dancing *Gleleb* in competition with another village. The girl in the centre has a whistle in her mouth

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6. Young man drumming for a *Jimi Reja* dance at an installation ceremony. This dance, named after an American band leader, is allowed only on important occasions

NGONI

[Facing P. 224]

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[p.224]

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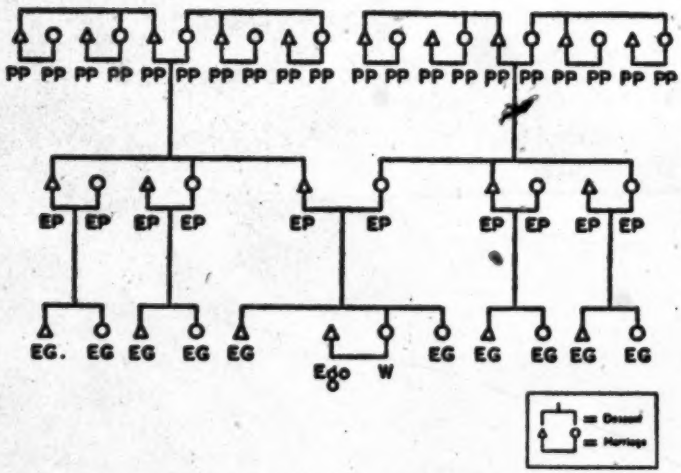

Diagram 2. Kinship terms for wife's kindred

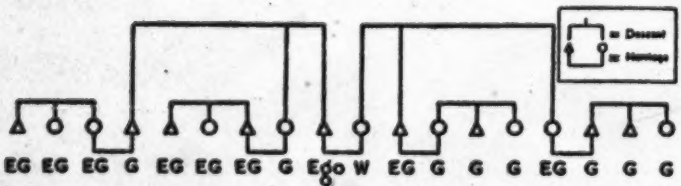

Diagram 3. *Sibling* and *sibling-in-law*

The use of *sibling* to describe ego's spouse's sibling's spouse is more common by men than by women.

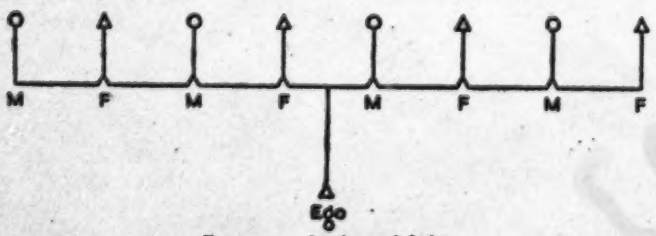

Diagram 4. *Mother* and *father*

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PLATE XVI

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7. Drying a cow-hide at a funeral. A beast from the herd of the dead man has been killed for the mourners. The skin will be buried on top of the coffin

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8. Later, at the same funeral. The body has been interred and the mourners are sitting round the grave, near the cattle-byre, listening to a sermon by a local preacher of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission

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In all the diagrams ego is shown as male. There is no difference in the way these terms are used when ego is a woman, except that she calls her spouse *husband* and not *wife*. There is no consensus as to what great-grandparents should be called. Sometimes *father* 601 [183]

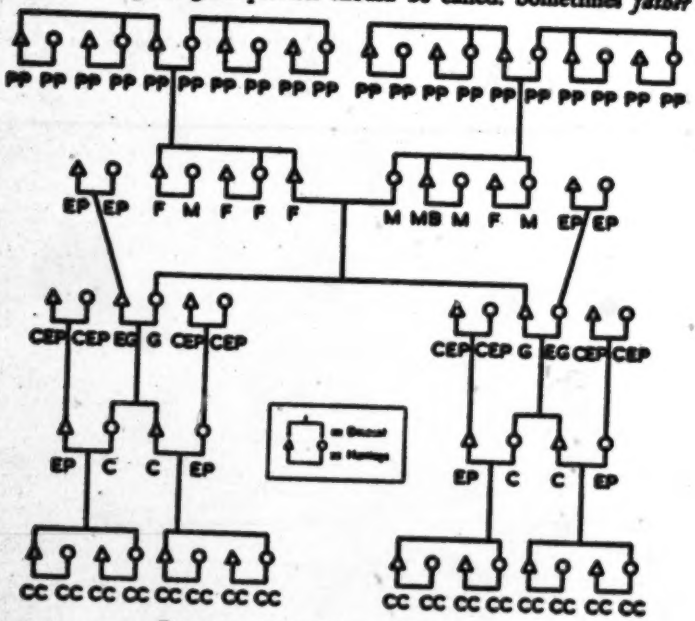
PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP PP
EP EP F M F F F M MB M F M EP EP
CEP CEP EG G CEP CEP
CEP CEP G EG CEP CEP
EP C C EP
EP C C EP
CC CC CC CC CC CC CC CC
CC CC CC CC CC CC CC CC

Diagram 5. Extended use of kinship terms

or *mother* is used, according to sex, while others use *grandparent*. Similarly, great-grandchildren are sometimes called *child*, sometimes *grandchild*.

Exogamy and Descent-names

A man may not marry anyone whom he calls *mother*, *father*, *mother's brother*, *child*, *affine*, *child's parent-in-law*, and, except for his *cross-cousins*, *sibling*. Marriage with his brother's wife's sister, whom he calls *sibling-in-law*, is allowed, but is thought to be not very satisfactory. As we have seen, these terms can be applied widely, with no theoretical limit to the extent of application. Little interest is shown, however, in tracing genealogical relationships accurately, and the sex and age of the relative referred to may affect the term used. If a 582 835 601

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582 proposed marriage appears to conflict with these rules of incest, be-
835 cause of some distant relationship between the couple, the connexion
601 may be conveniently forgotten by the parties concerned. Incestuous liaisons between people whose parents are still alive are hampered from becoming proper marriages by the refusal of the woman's parents to accept any marriage payments from the man. Similar liaisons between older people may alter the relative kinship status of other couples so that their marriages become incestuous, and they will appeal to the courts. For example, an old man married his son's wife's mother, whom he called *child's parent-in-law*. In consequence, his son and his son's wife became *sibling* to each other. The young woman refused to go on sleeping with her husband, who appealed to the court. The old man was then ordered to give up his newly acquired wife, so that his son's marriage might continue.

[601] At its widest extension, the term *sibling* is applied to any person of
551 the same descent-name as ego and of approximately the same age.
614 The other kinship terms are then applied to the relatives of this
582 nominal sibling in the usual way. However, there is no rule of exogamy applying to these nominal relatives. These descent-names have been referred to by other writers on the Ngoni as clan-names and the aggregate of people with the same descent-name as a clan. The Ngoni term for such names, *vi-ŭongo*, is related to the Zulu *izi-bongo*, and many of the Ngoni descent-names are the same as the names of the clans described for the South-Eastern and Central Bantu.[1] However, among the Fort Jameson Ngoni at the present time, the category of persons formed by all those holding the same descent-name does not have any of the attributes generally attributed by modern writers to the clan. There are no clan heads, no clan exogamy, no clan taboos, no beliefs in a common origin from a legendary ancestor, no clan totems, and no correlation between clan and territory. In these conditions it seems better to use the term descent-name, as has been done for the Lozi.[2] Informants state that even in the old days, when there was a closer approximation to a clan system, there was no clan exogamy. These names are normally inherited by the child from its father, and some of the names are not very common in the tribe, so that it happens that all the people bearing the one name may be the patrilineal descendants of one man. Such groups are exogamic, but this is

[1] Cf. Young, *History of the Tumbuka-Kamanga*, p. 143, for a classification of some of these names, on the basis of ethnic origin.

[2] Gluckman, *Economy of the Central Barotse Plain*, pp. 84–5.

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said to be due to their definite knowledge of common patrilineal descent rather than due to the common name. At the other extreme are names such as *tembo*, *lungu*, and *phiri*, which are derived from the neighbouring tribes of the region and are very common and have no connotation of exogamy.

Prior to the arrival of the Ngoni descent-names were inherited in the matrilineal line by the Cewa, Nsenga, and other tribes of the Eastern Province. Under Ngoni influence, the rule was reversed and the great majority even of recently incorporated Ngoni now bear the same names as their fathers. Some people do take the descent-names of their mother, as, for example, a child born in adultery who is not accepted by its mother's husband, or one whose father dies young so that it is brought up by a relative of its mother. As with the Tonga of Mazabuka, some descent-names have locally alternative forms, and in one instance men and women take different names.[1]

Appeal is sometimes made for protection and help on the basis of a common descent-name, but this is not a very strong tie and is invoked only when no closer link can be found. The principal uses of descent-names are in polite forms of address and in connexion with beer-drinking.

Marriage Payments

The initiative in choosing a spouse usually lies with the man. A woman who takes too much initiative in this matter is regarded, usually correctly, as likely to be unfaithful. In the old days marriages were more frequently arranged by the parents of the couple concerned, but now this happens only when the man is away. Men who are on the farms or in the mines send money home to brothers or fathers with instructions to find them suitable wives, and to offer the money as the legalization payment. During the 1939–45 War this arrangement was continued by soldiers who were away.

The most important payment in connexion with marriage is that made by the bridegroom to the bride's father which I shall call the legalization payment.[2] This payment is the one that establishes unequivocally the right of the husband to damages should his wife commit adultery or be allowed by the court to divorce him. It must be observed, however, that damages may still be awarded to the husband under certain conditions where no legalization payment has

[1] The name *nuda* for a man becomes *mwuda* for a woman in certain areas.
[2] *Cimalo*, no plural. Cf. Young, *Customs and Folk Lore*, p. 61.

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583 [671] been made. It is the legalization payment that is recorded on the marriage registration certificate when one is issued.

Often this payment is postponed until some years after marriage and sometimes it is never made at all. It is generally £1. 10*s*., and is normally provided by the bridegroom himself out of his savings, although in the old days a man would have been helped by his father. The money goes to the bride's father, and there is no legal obligation on him to share the money with his relatives, although he may do so. Marriage ties can be reinforced by a whole series of ceremonies and ceremonial exchanges and payments between the man's people and the woman's people, and a marriage in which all these ceremonies have been performed is regarded as being 'well fixed'. In such a marriage the parents and siblings of the couple have come to know each other, have collaborated in ritual activities, and have probably had occasion to deliberate together as a court of conciliation in settling quarrels between the couple. This line of development is seldom taken in a marriage in which the legalization payment has not been made. If the husband refuses to pay, then the wife's people will not brew beer for him and his parents, and will not use their influence with his wife to maintain the marriage. We may say that in a well-fixed marriage the two families are linked together, and that in one that is not well fixed it is only the two individuals who are linked. Indeed when no payments have been made it is common for the bride's relatives to profess ignorance of the name of the husband, or at least of his parents' names. No action can be taken in the court to enforce marriage payments, although in an adultery or divorce case the court may order the legalization payment to be made.

585 476 578 The ceremonies of marriage should not be thought of merely as occasions for harmonious co-operation. They may also become the vehicle for the expression of aggression between the two families involved. This is particularly true of the obligation on the man to bring a party of his friends to hoe in the garden of his father-in-law. The hoeing party may do more harm than good to the crops if the present offered them by the father-in-law is considered inadequate.

583 178 [231] Prior to the conquest of the tribe the principal marriage payment was bride-wealth,[1] consisting of so many head of cattle. In those days, according to informants, no legalization payment was made. Nowadays bride-wealth is paid only in a small proportion of marriages, and rarely until after several children have been born. In the old days

[1] *Malowolo*. Cf. the Zulu verb *uku-lobola* and noun *ilobolo*.

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marriages in which bride-wealth was paid were patrilocal, and those in which it was not paid, except for marriages with slave wives, were matrilocal. The matrilocal marriages were made only by recently incorporated Ngoni. The payment of bride-wealth is now significant only in relation to the residence and affiliation of the children of the marriage and does not affect the residence of the couple themselves. It frequently happens that a man goes and lives in the village of his wife when they are first married and that after a year or so he takes her back to his own village. This practice is fairly common among the matrilineal tribes of the region. A small payment[1] of five shillings or so may be made instead to enable a man to take his bride to his own village without first completing a period of matrilocal residence. Sometimes the legalization payment is considered sufficient to exempt from matrilocal residence. Indeed it is indicative of the wide range of variation in the different payments made and not made and in the significance attached to them that some informants were unable to state with certainty what payments had been made in their own marriages, although they knew the amount of money or animals that had been handed over.

This wide range of variation in behaviour in relation to marriage is one instance of the high measure of cultural heterogeneity of the Fort Jameson Ngoni. While present-day conditions are relevant to a study of Ngoni marriage, at the same time the effect of the combination of people with very different conceptions of marriage into a single state must not be overlooked. Among families that are powerful and claim to have migrated with Zwangendaba from the south, patrilocal marriage and the payment of bride-wealth are more frequent than they are among families of more recent incorporation. Cross-cousin marriage is noticeably more frequent in villages with people of Bisa descent than in the population as a whole. In Nyasaland, where there is a sharper cleavage into old Ngoni villages and conquered Cewa villages, the old Ngoni are characterized by a greater, and the Cewa by a lesser, incidence of patrilocal marriage.

Divorce

In the old days there was no way in which a woman could divorce her husband. A man could divorce his wife at any time by sending her back to her own people. The usual procedure nowadays, except in cases of adultery, is for the man to give his wife sixpence or a shilling

[1] *Ntbakula.*

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586 and inform her that she is divorced. If the wife has committed adultery, the husband can take the case to court. If the adultery is proved he is 586 usually awarded £3 damages against his wife and £3 against the co-684 respondent, and the woman is divorced. On the other hand, a woman can seek a divorce in the courts on the grounds of desertion or cruelty. The court will award a divorce if the desertion or cruelty is proved, but may also rule that the woman must pay £3 to her husband's family.

If a man does not wish to divorce his adulterous wife, the court will award him damages of £1. 10*s*. against his wife and £1. 10*s*. against the co-respondent. In adultery cases in which a divorce is granted the damages awarded against the woman are often met by the co-respondent, who then marries the woman, but where there is no divorce the woman will appeal to her father or brothers to help her pay her husband.

If a woman runs away from her husband there is nothing that the husband can do to force her back, and if methods of conciliation fail, he has little hope of redress, except in cases of seduction or abduction. If the woman refuses to rejoin her husband the court may award damages against her, but such a marriage usually ends in adultery on the part of the woman and a divorce on that ground.

586 It has been observed by District Officers that divorce is not so frequent among the Ngoni as compared with their Cewa neighbours. 593 Nevertheless, divorce must be considered as a frequent occurrence among the Ngoni, and is so regarded by the people themselves. There is a maxim that a man ought to rely on his brothers, not on his wife, and one informant remarked: 'Never trust your wife; perhaps to-morrow you will divorce her.'

The Wife's Mother

606 The tensions between the two groups linked by a marriage find their most formal expression in the attitude prescribed for a man to his wife's mother. While a woman can speak to her parents-in-law and enter their house, a man cannot do so. In his contacts with his father-in-law he must be quiet and reserved, and although face-to-face contact is not considered shocking, it should be as rare as possible. But a man must go out of his way to avoid his mother-in-law, and this injunction is in the main observed in practice. The avoidance is usually phrased in terms of a prohibition on the entry into the hut of the mother-in-law. A man who has to pass by this hut will normally go round the back of it.

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It is therefore appropriate that, when a man has proved himself to be a good son-in-law by fulfilling his obligations to his parents-in-law and by treating their daughter well, he is invited to make a formal entry into the house of his wife's parents. This is the occasion for much dancing and speech-making. The salient features of the ceremony[1] are as follows. The married couple come in procession with their relatives and neighbours from their village to the village of the woman's parents. The procession is led by the eldest child of the couple carrying a knobkerry. They dance in the cattle byre and then enter the hut of the woman's parents. Here after some drinking and dancing, during which the visitors keep themselves more or less to one side of the hut and leave the other side for the relatives of the woman, there is a ceremony in which a gift is offered by the man's people to the woman's people, and in which a female relative of the man takes a spoonful of boiled maize from a dish and then spits it out again. She is followed by a female relative of the woman, who does the same. The two people who do this are close relatives of the couple, sometimes sisters. The knobkerry stays in the hut overnight, and the next day the man's parents come and they formally enter the woman's parents' hut. The couple also come into the hut with their friends and the woman's mother offers beer to the man in the usual way by kneeling at his feet and drinking to him. He then drinks from the bowl, and it is passed round for everyone in the hut to drink.

The completion of this ceremony marks the setting aside of the avoidance taboos to the greatest extent allowed. The man may still not sit on the same mat as his mother-in-law but he can now talk to her and can come into her hut. It is, as it were, the final reward of the good son-in-law and marks the end of the series of adjustments in relative status that began with the small gifts that the man made before the legalization payment was fixed. The hostility between the two families has been reduced by carrying out through the years their reciprocal rights and duties, and their common interest in the children of the marriage is symbolized by the eldest child who leads the procession from one village to the other.

Even on such a family occasion as this, village, as distinct from kinship, ties remain important. At one ceremony I attended the leader of the first delegation from the man's village was described as being just an important woman in the village and not related to him. [621]

[1] *Mgomis.* Cf. the Zulu verb *uku-gomisa*, to enter another person's house (Colenso).

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Grandparents

603 Children on weaning are often sent to their grandmothers to be brought up. The payments made in the marriage do not seem to influence either the choice of grandmother or whether or not the child stays with its parents. A child is sometimes sent to an old woman not its grandmother but related in some other way who lives in the same or a nearby village and who already has a brood of children to look after. This separation from the parents may occur whether the grandmother lives in the same or in a different village from the parents. Grandparents, and in particular that grandmother by whom a child was brought up, become confidants in later life. It is to her husband's grandparents that a wife complains if her husband does not fulfil his sexual obligations, while it is through the bride's grandparents that the groom should approach her parents when arranging the marriage. [606] The husband must avoid his wife's mother, but his wife's mother's mother and his wife's father's mother can sit on the same side of the house as he does, as though they were themselves married to him. When he is drunk a man can fondle the breasts of his grandmother, whereas to attempt to do this to his mother would be regarded as shocking.

593 691 578 [586] While it is the grandmothers who intervene in the beginning of a matrimonial quarrel when the dispute is still an affair of the village, it is the parents of the couple, or if the parents are dead or senile the brothers, who will go to court to support them when the dispute has moved to the judicial zone of activity. Women seeking divorce on grounds of desertion get their fathers to speak in their favour, while the absentee husband, who may be lost in Southern Rhodesia, will be represented by his father or his brother. Occasionally a father may give his support to his daughter-in-law rather than to his son if the son has annoyed his father as well as his wife.

593 571 578 [684] Outsiders cannot intervene in the disputes within a family, although they may be called in to give their support to one side or the other. In particular the family of a man will not themselves take the initiative in bringing an action against his wife, however strongly they may rally to his support in a dispute where the initiative is taken by the wife's people. This principle applies even in cases of incest. For example, a woman whose husband was away in Southern Rhodesia slept with her father. The husband's brothers wrote to Southern Rhodesia to tell him what was happening, but as in his reply he did not instruct them to take proceedings in the matter, nothing more was done about it.

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IV. WIDER CONTACTS

Other Local Groups

We have so far in this account been concerned with delineating the main outlines of political and village structure and the kinship system. We have examined the internal constitution of the tribe and have only been concerned secondarily with the external relationships by which the Ngoni are connected with the wider world. But in the Fort Jameson District there are, and have been for many years, people who do not fall within the tribal framework but with whom the Ngoni interact. These include people from the British Isles and South Africa, Indians, and Coloured persons, as well as Africans from other tribes. The Europeans are there as administrators, missionaries, farmers, and traders. Indians are traders and farmers, while Coloured persons are farmers and foremen. Africans from other tribes are, like the Ngoni, labourers on the farms and in the township, as well as subsistence cultivators in their own tribal areas. 563

The land of the District is divided into Native Reserve and Trust land, farm-land, township, and Crown land. Almost all Ngoni villages lie on Reserve or Trust land, and it is in this zone that most of the activities described so far take place. On the farm-land Ngoni participate not as headmen or lieutenants or chiefs, but as labourers and foremen. They still fill the roles of husband, wife, sibling, parent, and child, and sometimes other kinship positions, but the family in the farm compound is on a smaller scale than in the village. In the town of Fort Jameson the range of activity open to them is greater, and there are Ngoni butchers, drivers, clerks, shop assistants, Native Urban Court assessors, and so on. All these roles on farm and in the town are shared with Africans from other tribes in the Eastern Province and from more distant regions. 311 463

The Churches

The influence of the non-African groups extends out beyond the areas in which they live into the reserves. We have already seen how the Administration has affected the life of the tribe. The Christian Church has also had a profound influence. By 1910 there were three denominations at work in Ngoni country: the Dutch Reformed Church Mission,[1] the White Fathers,[2] and the Universities' Mission to 797 795

[1] Algemeente Zending Commissie der Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerk in den Oranje Vrijstaat.

[2] Société des Missionaires de Notre Dame d'Afrique, a Catholic Order.

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797 795 Central Africa. The U.M.C.A. subsequently concentrated its activities in another part of the District, so that the two main denominations are now the Dutch Reformed Church and the Catholic Church. There was for a time a branch of the Livingstonia Mission (Free Church of Scotland) in the area, while more recently a Seventh Day Adventist Mission has begun work. Since 1924 there have been some adherents to the Watch Tower[1] amongst the Ngoni, but this movement did not become important until some years later.

797 872 [875] Primary education is carried on in mission schools subsidized by the Administration, but there is also a Native Authority school over which the chiefs exercise some influence and which is to some extent supported by Native Treasury funds. The teachers in the elementary schools live in the villages, but they do not exercise very much influence outside their classrooms. This does not appear to have been the case in the past, when there was greater hostility between the different missions and when the missions tended to disregard the tribal authorities. The teachers then seem to have set themselves up as headmen on their own, and schools were built without the permission of the local headmen. In many cases where the issue between the missions was undecided, there were two schools in the same village. In the middle 'thirties many of these so-called schools were closed on the initiative of the Administration and the teachers who remain are now more interested in education than in politics.

872 [595] [593] A village school serves more than one village, so that the children of a neighbourhood containing, say, half a dozen villages get to know each other and visit in each other's villages. Certain dances and songs, known as *konsert*, are performed by parties of schoolchildren going from one village to another, and this leads to similar inter-village dancing in the evenings organized by groups of boys. At the end of term a number of schools of the same denomination combine to perform a rather more elaborate programme of songs and dances, and these displays are attended by many adults.

797 794 797 The deacons and evangelists are of greater importance in the political life of the tribe than are the school teachers. Deacons take a certain initiative in settling disputes in the village, and they report to their missions deaths and serious sins that affect their people. They arrange for religious instruction for catechumens and may on occasion organize opposition to some practice that has been declared wrong by the mission. Evangelists are responsible for a number of villages and

[1] The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

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may often be heard in the afternoons blowing their whistles to call their flock to prayer in the local school. 797

Meetings of all deacons and evangelists of one denomination within the tribe are held every year or so. Permission to hold these meetings has to be obtained from the chief, who may sometimes attend. Food is provided by the local church members and a levy to raise funds for buying a goat or sheep may be made. The initiative at these meetings is taken by the senior deacons and decisions reached are passed on to the members by the deacons. Church services, which are attended by people from many villages, are not only meetings for worship but are also occasions when instructions for collective action are given. For example, a lieutenant was recently suspended by his mission for helping to find another wife for his chief. Church members in his county were then instructed at a church service that they must not attend the funeral of this man or of any of his children. 795 [794] [688]

The tribal area is divided into two zones controlled by the two main denominations, with some overlapping, and this division cuts across the county boundaries, so that people from more than one county have a common interest in a church serving them all. This interest is reinforced by attendance at funerals and prayer meetings in the villages.

The Watch Tower, also known as Jehovah's Witnesses, or in the vernacular, as The Society, is now the third sect of importance in the area. This organization has had a rather chequered career, and has been the target of much adverse criticism from missions, Administration, and chiefs. From the point of view of social structure, it is significant because its organization within the tribe cuts across the county boundaries, because it holds that the teachers of the other denominations are wholly false, because its membership is drawn largely from people who previously belonged to these other denominations, and because no local Whites and few persons of importance in the tribe are members of this sect. In the past, members of the Society opposed the chiefs on principle, but this attitude is not held now, and opportunities are taken to demonstrate their loyalty to the existing order. Meetings are held in different parts of the country every month, and members from other parts are housed and fed by the local members.

Not every person in the tribe has been baptized as a Christian, but the initiative in religious affairs has passed to the functionaries of the different denominations. While the indigenous practices of the people 797

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797 have affected the content of their Christian beliefs and their utilization of Christian institutions, there is now little religious activity that can be called pagan.

The Nyasaland Counties

685 The Fort Jameson Ngoni maintain strong connexion with the two counties under Ngoni chiefs in the Fort Manning division of Lilongwe District, Nyasaland. When the border was drawn between North-Eastern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, about a quarter of Mpezeni's tribal area fell within Nyasaland. The two countries have been administered separately, so that the ties that have persisted have done so despite the formal division of the area and are in the main derived from sentiments related to pre-conquest times. These ties are seen in operation in the attendance of the Nyasaland chiefs at Mpezeni's village on various formal occasions, as at the ceremony ending the mourning for Mpezeni II and beginning the reign of Mpezeni III. In 1920 a delegation from the Nyasaland chiefs visited Mpezeni, and in 1922 Mpezeni took a party across into Nyasaland to visit the two chiefs, apparently with the idea of discussing the possibility of moving his capital into Nyasaland[1] where there was more land available than there was for him in Northern Rhodesia. From time to time Mpezeni has called on the Nyasaland chiefs to send him maize when his own supplies have run low, and these requests have been met. The Nyasaland Administration has also tried to keep alive the connexion with Mpezeni. In the past the Magistrate at Fort Manning brought the Nyasaland chiefs into Fort Jameson to meet Mpezeni there on such occasions as the King's Birthday, while in 1932 when there was a dispute between the two chiefs as to which was the senior, the District Officer informed them that the question did not arise as they were both only lieutenants of Mpezeni. On the other hand, the Nyasaland Administration has intervened to prevent tribal levies for the benefit of Mpezeni.

There are also relationships across the border that arise principally from the mere territorial contiguity of the two areas. The border, which is the Luangwa–Nyasa watershed, is not easy to follow and there has sometimes been doubt as to where it runs. The villages [361] stretch without interruption across the watershed and there is much coming and going from one village to another. Some villages have moved from one country to the other and many people have relatives [797] on both sides of the border. The Catholic Missions were for a long

[1] Mpezeni I had the same idea. Cf. *British Central Africa Gazette*, 1 August 1897, p. 2.

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Maravi FR4

N 635 [797] [743] N [438]

time controlled from a mission station just inside Nyasaland, so that many people crossed to attend religious services and receive instruction. From Mpezeni's own county it is easier to get to the hospital at Fort Manning than to the one at Fort Jameson, so that people wanting European medicine tend to go to Nyasaland for treatment rather than to Fort Jameson. Nyasalanders are for their part attracted into Northern Rhodesia by the market for foodstuffs among the urban population, White and Black, of Fort Jameson and by the greater variety of goods on sale there.

Other Ngoni Groups

N 101 173

The Fort Jameson Ngoni are conscious of their links with the other groups of Ngoni scattered over Central Africa, and of their similarity with the Ndebele and the Swazi and Zulu. The Paramount Chief is sometimes praised by the recital in the Ngoni language of the past exploits of the Ngoni, how they crossed the Zambezi, and how they conquered one tribe after another. On one occasion I heard someone who cannot speak Ngoni praise the Paramount by repeating, in Ndebele, which is similar to Ngoni, a praise of Mzilikazi[1] which he had learnt by rote. This oration was accepted without comment by the Paramount. Lancaster has recorded a legend that Lobengula[2] fled to Mpezeni after the second Matebele War, and that he died in the country.[3] Some years after his installation Mpezeni II was visited by a delegation from Mombera, chief of the Ngoni of Northern Nyasaland, which, it is said, came to ratify Mpezeni's position as Chief of the Fort Jameson section of the Ngoni. An important headman in Mpezeni's county, who bears the same name as Chief Chiwere of the Ngoni of Dowa District, still claims from time to time that because his namesake and alleged relative is a chief, he too ought to be a chief.

Nsenga and Yao

N M 648 [197]

The Ngoni are on more friendly terms with the Nsenga of Petauke District than with the other matrilineal tribes of the region. Some of the kinship ties that were formed as a result of intermarriage between the two tribes in the 1870's can still be traced, and their languages are similar. Mpezeni III went in 1944 with his first lieutenant and twenty-five followers to visit the Nsenga Chief Manjawanthu, and he is expected to return the invitation.

[1] The first Ndebele king. [2] Son of Mzilikazi, defeated by the Whites.

[3] Lancaster, p. 83. Cf. *British Central Africa Gazette*, 15 May 1896, p. 2, and Posselt, *Upangula the Seatterer*, pp. 112–24.

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Yao FT7

N Y 648 691

The Yao are mistrusted more than any other tribe, and some of the decisions taken by the courts are harsh on Yao. For example, a Yao man who was married to an Ngoni woman had, it was alleged, caught venereal disease from his wife. His wife then applied to the courts for a divorce, which was granted, together with the custody of the children. No bride-wealth had been paid in the marriage, but the husband now offered to pay in order to retain the children. This bride-wealth was refused by the woman's parents. The Yao appealed, but the judgement was upheld, and in addition he was ordered to go back to Nyasaland at once. He asked for permission to return to the woman's village in order to collect his belongings, and this was granted by the court, after first securing agreement between the couple as to the extent of his possessions, to wit, four plates and two beds. This deportation order was made despite the fact that the Yao had been living with his wife for twenty-one years. If a man of some other tribe had been involved, it is unlikely that he would have been ordered to leave the country, nor would the court have been so suspicious of his trying to take away more than his rightful share of the household possessions.

N Y 648 583

A Yao, who had a good job in Fort Jameson, once offered 30*s.* to the Paramount Chief when he was in the town as the legalization payment for a woman of the royal lineage whom he wished to marry. The Paramount Chief refused the money on the ground that the man was a Yao and he was not going to permit Yao to marry into the royal lineage, despite the protest of one of his lieutenants that the Yao was just a man like anyone else.

N 186 609 N Y 648

The reason that is given for this dislike of Yao is that they are sexually very virile, due to the medicines that they possess for increasing potency. It is perhaps significant that the same is said of Indians, who are also disliked. The Yao are known among the Ngoni for their great knowledge of medicines of all kinds, and the allegation of unnatural sexual vigour may be a rationalization of the fear that the Yao may practise sorcery among the families into which they marry. Another factor that may operate is that the Yao are the only tribe in the region that the Ngoni cannot claim to have conquered.

Political Relations with Other Tribes

N 648 721

Before the European conquest relations between the Ngoni and other tribes were principally those of raiders and raided. The great season for raiding was after the harvest, when the surrounding tribes

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could be raided for their crops, as well as for captives, and when the rivers did not form such an obstacle to rapid movement as they did during the wet season. Some of the early reports of travellers suggest that there was some sort of alliance or working arrangement between the Ngoni and Mwasi Kasungu, whose territory acted as a buffer-state between Mpezeni's Ngoni and Mombera's Ngoni of Nyasaland[1] but this alliance does not seem to have been very stable.

The British Administration restored or created Cewa chieftainships that now completely encircle the Ngoni except where the Ngoni area reaches to the edge of the waterless and uninhabited Luangwa escarpment. The Administration did not recognize any right of the Ngoni over these Cewa areas, and it is now difficult to discover how much control was in fact exercised by the Ngoni over the Cewa at that time. The Ngoni certainly continued to hold that they were entitled to control the Cewa. In 1913, when the formation of reserves was being discussed with the Administration, the Ngoni chiefs are said to have been disappointed that the scheme would give the Cewa land of their own and later in the same year they tried to ensure that the Cewa to their south, who were to be granted a reserve separate from those of the Ngoni, should be formally placed under the control of Mpezeni.

At the present time the principal institution in which Ngoni co-operate with other tribes under the aegis of the Administration is the Eastern Province African Provincial Council. This body meets once a year for three days, and is attended by delegates from all the Superior Native Authorities in the Eastern Province, as well as by representatives of the Administration. It discusses matters of common interest and it elects two members to represent the Eastern Province on the African Representative Council of the whole Territory, but it does not have any legislative or executive powers. Its meetings are open to the public,[2] but as yet few people attend and the recommendations reached are passed on to only a small section of the tribe. The delegates to the Council are chosen by the Paramount Chief on the advice of his lieutenants.

There are also other political relationships that unite Ngoni with other tribes. Some of them arise from common residence in an area outside the Ngoni country. Representatives are stationed at the

[1] Money and Smith, *Explorations in the Country West of Lake Nyasa*, p. 152.

[2] Except on the first day, when the African members of the Council meet by themselves in Committee.

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648 principal urban centres on the railway line in Northern Rhodesia who represent the Ngoni Native Authority in the various Native Urban Courts. These representatives are appointed by the Superior Native Authority, that is, by the Paramount Chief and his lieutenants. These posts are regarded in much the same light as those of the minor chiefs except that the tenure of office is not so stable, and the same struggles to gain them take place. There are Ngoni members of the Fort Jameson African Urban Advisory Council, but they are elected by urban Africans and are not appointed by the Native Authority.

Rural and Urban Status

369 554 The relatively privileged position of certain individuals in the urban order may raise their status in the life of the tribe. We have already seen how the initiative in religious matters is taken by the deacons and evangelists, and these people are also called upon to lead the prayers that precede all county meetings. The orderlies in the hospitals in Fort Jameson are able to establish private practices and number chiefs and other important people among their clients. The senior shop assistants may find it possible to entertain important people by offering them European spirits. The clerks of the Administration, as part of the protective screen around the District Officers, can exercise their discretion in allowing pleas to go forward to them.

There seems to be very much less bribery and corruption than has been reported from other parts of Africa. The Ngoni are in the main more interested in and more able to make effective use of medicines and other material goods than they are of advance information. But the fact remains that the African Civil Service and the various commercial undertakings are institutions within which a man of no importance in the village and tribe can rise to a position of influence which will affect his dealings with other tribesmen. The only Ngoni on the African Representative Council, which meets yearly and includes representatives from the whole of Northern Rhodesia, was in 1946 not a headman or lieutenant but was the most prominent African businessman in Fort Jameson.

To some extent this association of high status in the urban community and low status in the rural one is inevitable, since it is only by absence from the district for many years that a man can advance himself sufficiently and acquire sufficient skill and seniority to reach this high urban status. The member of the African Representative

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Council mentioned above spent some tweny years of his life in Johannesburg. Fort Jameson itself is not a sufficiently big town for this process to take place within it, and yet it is only in Fort Jameson or on the tobacco farms that a man can live with a leg in both camps, going home to the village at the week-ends and probably keeping his wife in the village during the wet season to tend her crop.

On the other hand, there is some rivalry between the traditional leaders and the comparatively prosperous townspeople. The well-clad and well-housed Ngoni of the township are sometimes described scornfully by village people as 'merely White'. There is a feeling that the leading African traders are trying to monopolize the economic opportunities in the villages. Recently the same prominent Ngoni businessman proposed that he should take over the delivery of mail to the Native Authorities, which he claimed he would be able to do more efficiently with a car than can the present postman on a bicycle. The Paramount Chief did not answer this proposal but wrote instead to the Administration to complain against the danger of one man being allowed to earn so much more than anyone else while there were so many people who needed money. At the same time, men whose lives are led principally in the towns complain that in the villages there is 'nothing but jungle', and that the chiefs are old-fashioned and obstructive.

The Administration

The relationship between the Provincial Administration and the Ngoni is characteristically one of superordination and subordination. The District Officer can send for any Ngoni, but not even the Paramount Chief can send for the District Officer. This characteristic arises from two sources, from the premiss which we find held all over Southern Africa, that any White is superior to any Black, and from the supervisory role allotted to the Administration in the Native Authority scheme. These two facets of the same relationship are not always seen separately by the Ngoni, and in many contexts their behaviour towards the Administration is governed entirely by the fact that the District Officer and those above him are all White. Official reports by the Administration during the reign of Mpezeni II repeatedly remarked on the Paramount Chief's distrust of Whites, and this attitude still persists. Any kind of trouble at all, particularly when it is seen as a characteristic of the present times as opposed to the glorious trouble-free past of the days of peace, before the Whites

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648 came, is attributed to the Whites. I was told that the high incidence of divorce, the disappearance of wooden plates, the frequent breaches of the mother-in-law avoidance, were all due to the Whites. The District Officer is seen primarily as a member of this White tribe, and only secondarily as a member of the Administration as opposed to being a farmer or a missionary. An Administration official was once described by an admirer as 'a man whom the Ngoni trusted, although he was a White'.

In practice, it is the Administration, through the person of the District Officer, which supplies the stimulus to maintain the Native Authority structure in being in its present form. As far as many of the tasks allocated to it by the Administration are concerned, the Ngoni Native Authority falls into the class mentioned by Davidson as having 'still to be continually stirred into activity by the local District Officer'.[1] It is the Administration which calls the meetings of representatives of the whole tribe to discuss questions relating to land, agriculture, schools, labour migration, ex-soldiers, and the like. It is the Administration which supplies the forms to the Native Courts, the ubiquitous books that are the symbol of White power, which informs the Native Authority what taxes and licence fees to collect, which supplies land for resettlement, organizes the building of wells and roads, and so on.

Mistrust is certainly the principal characteristic of the Ngoni attitude to Whites, a mistrust which is based as much on what are felt to be past wrongs as on an inability to understand the motives for present administrative actions, however well intentioned these may be.[2] At the same time there is considerable admiration for White material achievements, and to a lesser extent for the large-scale political and economic developments of which they are aware. Sentiments such as 'the British Empire means peace for everybody' are not at all uncommon.

It is in relation to the farmers that the Administration is seen in the kindliest light, and it is from the Administration that Ngoni seek redress for infringements of their rights by Whites and Indians. The District Officer also acts as an agent for some of the smaller Ngoni traders, obtaining supplies for them from the urban centres. The Administration attempts to protect the rights of Ngoni by seeing that they are not cheated of their wages by planters or overcharged by traders.

[1] Davidson, *N.R. Legislative Council*, p. 29.
[2] Cf. Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, pp. 473–81.

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The tribe is represented to the Administration in the person of its chief, and the fact that it is through him that the Administration articulates with the tribe is realized by thinking people. In a wider sense, he represents the tribe to the White community as a whole. When I first started work in the area there were many formalities at my meetings with the Paramount Chief, so that I should understand the importance of his position. Mpezeni II is said never to have allowed a White to see him dancing, because of the mystical and social dangers involved. At a county meeting, held while the Paramount Chief was away in Livingstone, the court clerk reminded headmen that the month of May was approaching, and that he would soon be wanting people to hoe the Native Authority roads. When the time came, he did not want headmen to say they had no people. He continued: 'If the people do not obey the laws, then Mpezeni will not be well regarded by the Whites. Then when the Administration wants to make bad laws, Mpezeni will not protest, as he will want to punish his own people.' 648

If the chief is too attentive to the requirements of the Administration, then his standing with his own people is likely to suffer. A chief's court was once described as 'just a White court' because of its alleged bias in favour of the Administration's interpretation of native custom. On the other hand, this identification with the White Administration is not accepted by the chiefs and their advisers. In an adultery case, in which the husband did not want to divorce his wife but she refused to go back to him, Mpezeni, who was present, ordered the woman to return to her husband. A councillor asked the woman what she had to say. She said she loved the co-respondent. The councillor was annoyed, and asked her, 'Do you know who Mpezeni is?' The woman said, 'He 's a chief', using the usual word for chief, *nfumu*, current all over north-eastern Rhodesia. The councillor replied: 'No, Mpezeni is not just a chief, everyone is a chief nowadays.' The woman then said, 'He 's a White.' The councillor answered: 'No, Mpezeni is not just a White whose orders can be sometimes obeyed and sometimes ignored. Mpezeni is *nkhosi*, the great chief of the Ngoni, whose commands must always be carried out.' 643 554 177

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V. EARNING A LIVING

Intertribal Trade

439 There is little trade between the Ngoni and the neighbouring tribes, whose products are largely the same as their own. Fish is brought up from the Luangwa valley by Kunda and some of it is sold to the Ngoni of the Cipalamba, through whose villages the hawkers pass on their way to Fort Jameson. Bracelets are sometimes brought from Portuguese East Africa by Chikunda. The main attraction for these hawkers is Fort Jameson itself, and it is the fact that the town is encircled by the Ngoni that gives rise to trading with them. The geographical location of the town has also led to the growth in Ngoni [366] country of many stores and what are known in the vernacular as hotels, where tea and buns can be bought and where sometimes there is shelter for the night.

Of greater importance in the life of the tribe than these intertribal links are those arising from White and Indian economic activities. We may distinguish three zones of interaction, the shops both in Fort Jameson township and scattered throughout the district owned by Whites and Indians, the local tobacco farms, and the mines of Southern Rhodesia. The Ngoni have come to need cloth for clothes which they cannot produce themselves, and it is doubtful if there would be enough animals to provide skins for the tribe even if they did not insist on cloth. The need to earn money with which to buy clothes, soap, and other necessities can be met only by seeking employment on a farm, in Fort Jameson township, or farther off. A few people earn enough by selling vegetables in Fort Jameson, and there is a certain amount of maize and other cereals sold. These sales, however, do not provide sufficient income to reduce materially the extent to which people go out to work.

Control of Movement

101 To the White traveller, Fort Jameson District is an island of tobacco in a sea of bush. To the Ngoni, the island is not so sharply demarcated, and its characteristic property is cattle, not tobacco, yet it still remains an island, surrounded by a sea of other tribes whose 101 traditions are different from their own. The ships that cross this sea 489 are the lorries. In time past, men used to walk to their destinations, [493] going by Feira to Southern Rhodesia, or across the Luangwa to Broken Hill. A few used to go down to Lake Nyasa, and thence to the

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Lupa goldfields and Dar-es-Salaam. Nowadays almost everyone goes by lorry, but now as then a man has to go a long way before he can arrive at an island of friends in one of the urban centres. This means that, for the Ngoni, emigration is a definite event, and does not occur as a result of a gradual drifting farther and farther away from the tribal area. Lorries run from Fort Jameson to Lusaka and to Lilongwe, and from Missale to Mtoko in Southern Rhodesia. There is also a lorry service from Lundazi to Fort Jameson, but this does not lead anywhere else, and is not used by Mpezeni's people except locally. Lusaka is on a railway line, Lilongwe is connected by bus and train to Blantyre, while Mtoko is on the way to Salisbury. It is these lorry routes which now provide the links with the outside world, and along which people and goods travel, the people in both directions, and the goods, apart from tobacco, mainly inwards. Use of these routes is controlled by the chiefs, the Administration, by economic factors, and by the weather. This last has been less important of late, and the roads are seldom impassable for more than a week at a time, however heavy the rains. In order to travel on the lorries from Fort Jameson a man must have a ticket, which costs £1 for the journey to Lusaka, and less for the trip to Lilongwe. The lorry service from Missale to Mtoko is free.

The Administration exercise control by insisting that no man shall leave the Territory of Northern Rhodesia unless he is in possession of an identification certificate endorsed by the Administration permitting him to do so. In practice, such endorsements are not usually made unless the man can produce written permission from the chief that he is free to go. This working arrangement is intended to ensure that men do not flee the country when there are cases pending against them, and to prevent unjustifiable desertion of wives and children. In fact men are sometimes given permission to go while cases in which they are involved are still unheard.

The emigration of women and children is further controlled in that there is a law[1] forbidding a woman to leave the tribal area except in the company of her husband, or with a pass to leave from the Native Authority. Sucking children are allowed to accompany their mothers, but other children under the age of sixteen are not allowed to leave the province without permission of the Native Authority,[2] while boys

[1] Ngoni Native Authority Order 24.

[2] Ngoni N. A. Order 39. The child must be either accompanied by its parents or else accompanied by a guardian on the way to join its parents.

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486 562 858 over sixteen are not allowed to leave without a pass from their Native Authority until they have paid tax for one year at home.[1] These laws are quite energetically enforced, principally by the placing of Native Authority police at strategic points along the lorry routes. These police inspect the passes of all passengers on the lorries, and bring offenders before the nearest Native Court.

486 562 The devices adopted to evade these restrictions are much as one might expect. The drivers of the lorries may be won over, particularly by women. A woman may get a lorry driver to say that she is his wife, or even enter into a temporary marriage with him, if she wishes to run away without a ticket. Some people walk to the far side of the police point and then attempt to get on the lorry after the search has been completed. A woman who has a ticket but no pass may pose as the wife of some unaccompanied male passenger.

484 167 The motives for leaving the area are many. Most of the men go to look for work, although a few go away to visit their urban relatives and friends for a holiday. Others go to buy goods that may be unobtainable locally for the time being, such as tools or window-panes, or which they think they can get more cheaply elsewhere, such as bicycles. Many of the women go to join their husbands, but some are fleeing from them, or have grown tired of living at home married to men who live permanently in Southern Rhodesia, and are out to try their luck in the towns.

489 Whereas the outgoing lorries are comparatively empty of goods, the returning passengers are well loaded with belongings. The fares are higher, and the Mtoko–Missale service is not free on the northward trip. One of the most important commodities brought in along these 205 routes is the mail. Men working in Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere write home to keep their wives and brothers informed of their whereabouts, and send postal orders to enable their families to buy clothes.

This movement to and from the outside world must be seen in its relationship to the opportunities that exist for employment within the District on the tobacco farms.

Farm Labour

464 249 [361] No village in either of the reserves occupied by the Ngoni is more than 12 miles from a farm. This means that it is possible for a man to work as a labourer on a farm and yet retain a large number of his contacts with his village and chief. In particular, his wife and children

[1] Ngoni N. A. Order 37.

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can live in the village and cultivate a garden. The maintenance of contacts is facilitated by the fairly general cessation of work on the farms at the week-ends. Apart from two periods of tobacco slump, the local demand for labour has exceeded the supply ever since the earlier period of European settlement. As early as January 1900 the manager of the North Charterland Exploration Company complained to the Administration that the lack of local labour was very serious, and attributed this to the large number of people who were going away to work in Southern Rhodesia. This theme has been repeated over and over again ever since. The practical effect of this chronic local shortage of labour has been that work on the farms has always been a more easy-going affair than work away on the mines or in the big towns. Men have been able to absent themselves from work to attend to their affairs at home very much as they have pleased. Payment has been either for piece-work or for the number of days worked, so that at one time it was not unusual for a man to take two or three months to complete thirty days' work, for which he had contracted.

Prior to about 1930, there were a few villages located on farm-land, whose inhabitants undertook to work for so many days, with pay, in return for permission to remain on the land. With the completion of the move into reserves, this became rare, and at the present time the bulk of the people who live on farm-land are accommodated in compounds provided for them by the farmer. These people are the labourers on the farm for the time being, their families, and friends. The compound is under the charge of a foreman who is usually an employee of long standing on the farm. On some of the farms there are small gardens, but none of them, as far as I know, permit the keeping of cattle by the labourers. This means that a man with cattle must continue to keep them at home in his village or in the village of a relative. Cattle are still the principal form of investment, particularly for people who cannot spend their capital in building a brick house, so that it is common to find in a village that many of the cattle in the byre are being tended for the benefit of an absent owner who spends the majority of his time away on a farm and who may not even have a hut in the village.

The demand for labour on the tobacco farms varies considerably with the time of year, being greatest from about Christmas until about June. At the same time, the calls on a man to tend his own garden are greatest from about November until May. Farmers therefore try to get labour for a few days at a time from people who live in villages

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near their farms, who go home every afternoon after work and come back the next morning. Others employ women and children, and most boys work intermittently on the farms to earn enough to keep themselves in clothes until they are old enough to go away to Southern Rhodesia. Other boys work in their holidays from school.

To some extent people from the same village tend to go to work together in groups on a farm. This is particularly true in the case of the short-term labourers who sleep at home, since the choice of farm is restricted to those in the immediate vicinity of the village. Here sometimes the majority of the inhabitants of a village will turn out under the leadership of the headman of the village and work for three or four days on the same farm. Longer-term labourers may be attracted to a farm by the presence of a foreman from their own village.

Girls also go to work on their own, and many marriages are made as a result of encounters on the farms. Marriages made in this way are not always recognized by the parents of the girl until the man has brought her back to her village and formally approached her parents.

The villages near the farms, and to a lesser extent those near the township, sell beer to the labourers, while the farms themselves buy up most of the maize and other cereals that villagers have to sell.

The continual demand for labour on the farms leads to their serving as a sanctuary for fugitives from social pressure of one kind or another. For example, a native policeman was going round the villages obtaining labour for the Administration for essential public works. He adopted the normal practice of imposing a quota of labourers to be supplied upon each village and made the headman responsible for seeing that his village quota was met. If the headman did not do this, he enlisted the headman as a labourer. At one village the headman told the policeman that his people had all run away to the gardens when they had heard of the arrival of the policeman in the area. The policeman warned the headman that either he must exercise his authority over his people and order them back into the village so that he could enlist them, or else the headman would be enlisted. He came back the next day to see what had happened, and found that the headman had gone off to work on a farm. There is machinery for recovering such people, but it does not work easily or quickly, and by the time a man has been located and brought back, the reason for which he was wanted may have fallen away.

Disputes between Africans on farms can be dealt with at the nearest Native Court, but if the farmer wishes to enforce his rights under the

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Labour Ordinances, he can only do so through the District Commissioner's court at Fort Jameson, which may take up more of his time than he thinks the matter worth. In consequence, few actions are brought by farmers against their African labourers and if a man breaks his contract and deserts, no action may be taken against him.

It is not surprising that the efficiency of labour operating under these conditions is low, and that the wages are also low. These two conditions react on one another, and it is misleading to regard the low wages as the only cause of the inefficiency, or the inefficiency as the only cause of the low wages. The practical effect is that men who wish to earn more money than they can get as labourers on the farms at 14*s.* a month with food go away to Southern Rhodesia. It must be observed, however, that men started going to Southern Rhodesia long before the tobacco farms were opened up to their present extent.

Labour Migration

Prior to the European conquest, the only men who had worked for Whites were those employed as carriers by the handful of travellers who passed through the country before 1896, and as carriers and labourers by the North Charterland Exploration Company from 1896 onwards. But immediately after the end of the fighting in 1898, recruiting started among the Ngoni for police work in Southern Rhodesia, and there has been a continual flow of labour migrants south ever since.

There have been considerable fluctuations in the number of men going south since that time, particularly during the two world wars, when the military requirements of the Territory exercised a greater claim. The latest figures for the Eastern Province as a whole show that, in 1946, 23 per cent. of the taxable males registered in the province were absent from the province. Another 17½ per cent. were at work within the province.[1] In May 1947, in two Ngoni counties with a combined total of 1,739 registered taxable males, it was found that 30 per cent. of them were at work in the Eastern Province and a further 42 per cent. were away elsewhere, a total of 72 per cent. away from their villages. Half of those living outside the Eastern Province were classified as 'lost', in that their present whereabouts were unknown to the people at home.[2] These figures exclude all men who have been 'lost' for more than five years.

[1] Labour Department, *Annual Report, 1946*, p. 12.
[2] These figures were given me by the District Commissioner, Fort Jameson.

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484 Looked at from the point of view of the individual, we find that all
167 adult men have at some time or other been away to work, and that the majority have been to Southern Rhodesia once or twice.

Conclusion

466 In their lives on the farms and in Fort Jameson, Ngoni mix with men from other tribes, and their position is largely subsumed under the conditions common to all African labourers on all European-controlled farms. The Administration does not support the Ngoni more [648] than the Cewa, or one chief more than another. As the content of the relationship becomes more and more related to the world-wide polity and economy, so the nature of the relationship becomes common to a wider group. Ngoni living in Fort Jameson Compound live lives that are closer to the lives led by other tribes in compounds in other towns than they are to those led in the villages 5 miles away. 464 The phenomenon of labour migration greatly affects Ngoni social [167] structure, but is not a distinctively Ngoni institution in the same way as the Ngoni village is distinctively Ngoni. When Ngoni ex-[729] soldiers complain that when they were recruited they were promised that after the war they would get good jobs, and now find they do not get them, their sentiments derive more from their status as ex-soldiers, which they share with some millions of others, than they do from their status as Ngoni.

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